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# **Fractured Culture**

**The sociological poetics of the arts,  
participation and well-being**

**Owen J. Logan**

**PhD**

**2017**





# **Fractured Culture**

**The sociological poetics of the arts,  
participation and well-being**

**Owen J. Logan MA**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements of the  
University of Northumbria at Newcastle  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Research undertaken in the Faculty of Arts,  
Design & Social Science**

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## Abstract

In different countries participation in the arts has become a significant theme of government policies which foster the instrumentalisation of culture; Yúdice (2003), Belfiore and Bennett (2010), Eagleton (2014). Increasingly it is claimed that the arts have positive effects on social, political and economic well-being. The emphasis on people changing the arts — common in the political discourses of 1970s — has been substituted by arguments about the power of the arts to transform people's lives. This study tests these claims comparatively. The main questions asked are: what are the differences between instrumentalism from above or below in the political order; and how do the world of the arts and letters and the world of politics speak to each other today? Through extended interviews, life stories and discourse analysis, based on fieldwork in Britain and Venezuela, the study demonstrates the complex moral interdependency between European notions of aesthetic virtue and political or civic virtues. The political structuring of these virtuous relations is shown to be morally tenuous. It is argued they express the institutionalised but inadequate compensations associated with the 'good-faith economy' (Bourdieu 1977). Politically these relations are problematic; among other things they discursively separate the mind from the body which means that time and other basic needs tend to be neglected. It is argued that this complex relationship between aesthetic and political virtue is a significant factor in Statecraft, and in *unmaking* the militant role of the organised working class. It is suggested that these dynamics are a contributory factor in the ascendancy of the political far-right internationally. To counter the influence of the good-faith economy this study proposes greater public participation in the funding processes which support the arts.



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## **Declaration**

I declare that the work in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. Where the opinions, ideas and contributions of others appear they are fully acknowledged. A shorter version of chapter seven appears in *Contested Powers: The Politics of Energy and Development in Latin America*, Zed Books (2015).

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**Owen Logan**

18 July 2017



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*We must try to make possible a new, wider definition of art which includes the experience, the lives and the perspective of life of the working class, in which society is no longer embarrassed by creative play, in which society no longer fears the power of the imagination, in which making art popular and making popular art are drawn closer together.*

John McGrath (1984) <sup>1</sup>

The statement above from John McGrath, (1935-2002) the playwright and founding member of the 7:84 Theatre Company, captures the central theme of this study; namely the class politics of fractured culture as it is manifested in the arts, and ideas of art. Why is it possible to think of culture as something brittle or broken? The name of McGrath's company referred to the 1966 statistic that 7% of the UK population owned 84% of the wealth.<sup>2</sup> By all measures this ratio has increased even more in favour of the rich. A comparison made in 2011 between equivalent cemeteries in Hampstead and Bradford reveals eight times the number of infant deaths in Bradford, an illustration of the growing inequality and segregation known as Britain's 'north-south divide'.<sup>3</sup> The political far-right looks back nostalgically to a more culturally unified society. However the materialist approach to class which focuses on issues of ownership and economic rights, and which provided a name for McGrath's theatre company, critiques the notion that culture has ever been unified. The imagined common culture of the past was in fact highly stratified by inequality. A materialist historiography of gender, slavery, serfdom, race, religion, caste, and class would take us back a very long way in the history of socio-economic structures of inequality, and also show that culture is not always fractured in the same way.<sup>4</sup> Although the historical record is partly obscured by those same power structures which determined who could write, and whose voices constituted the public, it is clear that fractured culture is old and it has been compounded by structural developments. What is relatively new — dating back to the emergence of aesthetics as a distinct branch of European philosophy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century — is the idea that the powers of the imagination associated with the arts have a role in overcoming inequality. For this reason the 18<sup>th</sup> century deserves attention in this thesis.

Well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century the modest origins and education of long recognised talents such as William Shakespeare (1564-1616) and Robert Burns (1759-1796) still provided evidence of the naturalness and necessity of inequality. W.H. Mallock (1849-1923) used their artistic achievements, despite their social disadvantages, to bolster his influential arguments against

supposedly futile egalitarian reform.<sup>5</sup> At the level of political philosophy Mallock also creates a moral fracture. Pointing to the benefits of private enterprise and industry he showed that social progress might have nothing to do with broad mindedness demonstrated in the arts; in commerce at least, ‘narrow ideas and dullness’ were required for progress and greatness.<sup>6</sup> The origins of sociological poetics are bound up with Marxism and its analytical approach turns the conservative view the other way around. Works by Shakespeare or Burns reflect the political and economic turbulence of the times in which they were written and sociological poetics explores the way historical and socio-economic changes influence the development of genres, new artistic philosophies and new measures of greatness. So it is interesting that theories and practices of social engagement and progress can define what matters most in artistic production today. This thesis investigates the relationship between the arts and politics as an important aspect of modern Statecraft.<sup>7</sup>

It is no coincidence that the Marxist playwright McGrath should stress the idea of ‘creative play’ rooted in 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics. Play implies the spirit, rather than rules of artistic practice; and in this spirit people on the political left have often seen participation in the arts as a means of challenging and overcoming cultures which reproduce and magnify economic inequality. From this point of view the powers of the imagination might do more than merely articulate the need for solidarity; participation in the arts is a means to actually induce socio-political transformations, not least of artistic values.<sup>8</sup> To McGrath and others in 1984 the transformation of both art and politics appeared to be an increasingly urgent task as the organised working class in Britain underwent successive assaults from a radicalised Conservative government. In various ways contemporary projects such as Forum Theatre/Cardboard Citizens, Red Wedge, Welfare State International and Rock Against Racism/Love Music Hate Racism — to mention some of the more well known — opposed the general rightward shift. However, conservative anti-trade union and privatisation policies were largely upheld by New Labour governments elected in 1997, 2001 and 2005. As in many other countries, Britain also experienced a resurgence of far-right politics. In the context of the wars that mark the new millennium, a series of legal cases also cast serious doubts on the status of freedom of speech; one of the human rights supposedly promoted by the arts.<sup>9</sup>

The brief sketch above suggests that the faith in arts as an instrument of egalitarian politics is misplaced. However there is no obvious way to prove the case. Perhaps inequality, prejudice and the erosion of civil liberties would be even more marked were it not for the range of

cultural and artistic activities indebted to emancipatory ideas of creative play. In social science terms this is the problem of disaggregation; the difficulty of separating causal factors from one another. During the 1990s the arts were increasingly advocated on the basis of the psychological, political or economic benefits they brought to specific social and institutional issues such as mental health, public discourse, and economic regeneration. However, the positive effects of the arts have been poorly contextualised therefore artistic activities and projects appear un-implicated in the social problems they tackle. From such an optimistic viewpoint, although the problems targeted might be much the same, or even getting worse, the arts still seem to at least have the potential to improve matters. This thesis questions the assumption. I examine the discourses, or languages in action, which articulate the organisational priorities and ethics of artistic instrumentalism or socially engaged practice as it is also called. In light of this analysis I argue for a much more agnostic approach that gives greater weight to historical contexts of such arts projects. As two of the main case studies demonstrate, after half a century of artistic instrumentalism targeting the unequal provision of musical education in the UK, the same inequality of provision persists in the school system; moreover, paradoxically, the latest highly praised artistic approach to the problem has been adopted from Venezuela, a country with a worse record in educational policy.

With a striking disregard towards such State failures different governments have encouraged a semi-official discourse which aggregates the supposed benefits of the arts with other causal factors and represents them as uncontroversial instruments of socio-economic improvement. An influential account reflecting this confidence comes from Chris Smith who, in 2003, reflected on his time as a New Labour Secretary of State in charge of culture. Smith admitted to managing evidence so that the case for funding the arts would ‘touch the buttons that work’ in the Treasury by claiming that support for the arts would also benefit other areas of policy.<sup>10</sup> Smith recommended his approach to all arts administrators as a political necessity if intrinsic benefits of the arts were to be protected and advanced. The cultural policy scholar Eleonora Belfiore (2009) critiques Smith’s ideas as an example of ‘post-truth’ politics. Nevertheless, in the 2014 report entitled *The Value of the Arts and Culture to People and Society*, the Arts Council of England engaged with the Conservative government discourses of volunteering and ‘big society’ with the same pragmatism recommended by Smith.<sup>11</sup> In the report which overlooks academic research on class and culture, theatre-goers are said to be healthier than average, and people who regularly engage in artistic activities are happier as a result.<sup>12</sup> So signals of disposable income and symptoms of relative affluence instead take on

the appearance of causal factors. What the report unintentionally confirms is that Belfiore's serious critique of 'bullshitting' about the impact of the arts was not misplaced.

Some interviewees in the present study were critical of 'over-claiming'; something they felt was structured by funding routines that are overly concerned with the social and economic returns on investment in the arts.<sup>13</sup> Surveys of these benefits are typically concerned with expanding artistic participation and 'well-being for everyone'.<sup>14</sup> The choice of the word well-being rather than say, happiness, prosperity, welfare, rights and so on is also no accident. As chapter two discusses well-being is the catch-all political discourse used to aggregate all these benefits. Smith's speeches, collected in his 1998 book *Creative Britain*, promote this all embracing outlook persuasively. However there are two related problems Smith faces. Like religion, the arts are not an important source of meaningful or life-enhancing activity for everyone; and also like religion, not everyone is thought to be committed, knowledgeable or experienced enough to be involved in their governance. So while Smith (1998) argues for the importance of widening 'access' to the arts, and refutes the distinction 'between so-called hi-art and low-art' — picking out examples of 'excellence' across a fairly wide cultural field — he is still left grappling with the difficult to pin-down boundary between what he says is 'challenging, awkward and critical on the one hand, and the offensive on the other'.<sup>15</sup>

In 2003 Smith reinvigorated the traditional solution to these difficult issues of judgement by helping to lever a mixture of public and private funds to set up the Clore Leadership Programme, run by the Clore Duffield Foundation. The programme aims to develop an ethnically diverse and virtuous cadre of creative and cultural leaders whose qualities are said to include 'personal humility, courage, good judgment, certainty of purpose, authenticity and generosity.'<sup>16</sup> To this day the harnessing of civic virtue to the governance of culture is dependent on what Hugh Jenkins (1908-2004), a Labour Minister for the Arts in the mid 1970s called the 'Lord's Anointed People'.<sup>17</sup> Jenkins counted himself as a member of this spiritual aristocracy fostered by the State in educational and cultural institutions, and regarded as society's guides in the cultural field.<sup>18</sup> I will return to Jenkins later, and in subsequent chapters. Among the things which made him a challenging and awkward minister was his readiness to critique his own status and influence as a member of the spiritual aristocracy, and to expose the problems of this top-down means of enlightening public opinion. Reflecting on his experience as a government minister Jenkins pointed out the role of the arts and heritage sector in defeating the Labour government's proposals for a wealth tax.<sup>19</sup>

Jenkins's criticisms reflect the standpoint of cultural democracy a political agenda I discuss later in relation to social democracy. It should be remembered that Labour's manifesto commitment to the wealth tax in the 1970s was part of redistributive social contract negotiated with trade union leaders with the intention of enabling wage restraint.<sup>20</sup> This strategy had two very important features: the participation of trade union leaders in the political process; and a cross-party consensus that provoking recession would be an unacceptable way of countering a plethora of wage demands. Notwithstanding the policing function of certain trade union and political leaders in relation to wage demands at the time, trade union power is no longer widely seen as a means of leveraging a social contract, and recessions are more likely to be represented as objective or apolitical market conditions; indeed the market takes on the character of a Leviathan-like power which has the right to determine the socio-economic order. In this context participation in the arts has become a means of promoting both social cohesion and upward mobility; the very capacities once associated with the collective power of trade unionism. In the language which has been taken up from sociology, participation in the arts is seen to increase the possession of *social* and *human* forms of capital among the disadvantaged.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines social capital as 'networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups'.<sup>21</sup> In the eyes of the OECD social capital is distinguished from knowledge and educational qualifications (designated as human capital) by gestures of goodwill and mutual support which, for example, may help someone find a job. Generally speaking social capital provides a theory of human 'bonds'; a social glue that gives human identities their practical or instrumental significance in everyday life. However social capital theory has complex roots in social science. Bourdieu (1977) (1993) and Coleman (1990) think of social capital as an attribute of individuals, but Bourdieu describes this as part of a system of domination involving subtle forms of clientelism whereas Coleman stresses reciprocity, trust and free-exchange. Putnam et al (2004) regard social capital as a group attribute necessary for society's well-being.

It is difficult to distinguish theories of social capital from practices of *clientelism* which, in certain social contexts, are viewed positively. Recent research in Thailand suggests that the exchange of favours for political or commercial support, the sort of *quid-pro-quo* which defines the concept of clientelism, and the concept of social capital are actually different ways of talking about interlinked practices (Rattanasripanya 2011).<sup>22</sup> One person's idea of

corrupt favouritism that secures certain political or economic hierarchies might be another's sense of social or community virtue. Indeed artistic appreciation helped to dignify such questionable relations and produced powerful new 'communities' of interest which created Britain's spiritual aristocracy.<sup>23</sup> Another problem is that the concept of social capital is often prised from the critical discussion of capitalism as a system (Fine 2010). According to its advocates the expansion of commerce brings about greater competition and 'a free market', but if this is merely a fig-leaf discourse, which dignifies the intrusion of monopolies and cartels, then it may be seen as another expression of clientelism. Perhaps there is no free market, just larger or smaller forms of racketeering. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), cited above, stands out here because his theory of species of (economic, human, social and symbolic) capital form the theoretical elements of a critical analysis of the ambiguities of capitalist economism. In Bourdieu's (1977) view capitalism both abolishes and recreates areas of life which are mistakenly felt to escape the worst aspects of competition in markets.

This thesis critically engages with Bourdieu's sociology. I argue that ideas about participation in the arts need to be understood in relation to structures in the political economy (trade unions, think-tanks, NGOs, and grant-giving foundations) which shape different discourses of virtuous social agency. Considering the development of these different structures and their languages in action, it is evident that social capital among the wealthier sections of society is backed up by actual capital. Indeed, to sustain social bonds and influence down the generations, the ruling classes pass on to their family descendants the control of financial capital and the possibility of gift-giving. Increasingly their donations to good causes have also been a vehicle for the promotion of theoretical species of capital which may be accumulated at no political cost to raw economic privileges of the same classes. The original Clore Foundation was set up by the tax exile Sir Charles Clore (1904-1979) and then merged with the Duffield foundation by his daughter and heir Dame Vivien Duffield. Defenders or apologists for this patronage system connected to tax avoidance stress that great patrons such as Clore's daughter have genuine feelings for the institutions they support; in the words of Stephen Deuchar, director of Artfund, the UK's national fundraising charity, 'it's not philanthropy with an ulterior motive.'<sup>24</sup> Whereas corruption and clientelism in politics are best hidden, the desire to influence culture and society via the arts occasions conspicuous gift-giving and exhibitions of public spiritedness. In these instances it is the dynamics of competitive advantage and a reputation market which are veiled by the spirit of good-faith in



the world of the arts and letters. Chapter three tackles the deep political meanings of philanthropy, and the patronage of aesthetics in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as an essential episode in the development of capitalist Statecraft.

The modern State's legitimacy depends on balancing social cohesion and individual rights. In place of the social democratic limits on property rights (e.g. progressive taxes and public monopolies etc) which became fairly widespread in the 20th century, it is increasingly common for the problem of Statecraft to be presented as an excess of collective rights (e.g. in workplaces, and in religious beliefs or sexual orientation etc) that are pursued by self-seeking individuals who undermine economic efficiency and national cohesion. The counter arguments against individual or collective rights reveal the depth of complex cultural fractures which make it all the more important for States to demonstrate the possibility of unprejudiced advancement on the basis of merit. As this thesis points out the proposition that creative play is an avenue towards social relations based on such mutual understanding and respect has great currency, politically and financially, across art forms. Although the idea is usually disassociated from its roots in 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics chapter three argues there are good reasons to consider the contemporary relevance of the 'enlightened despotism' which helped finance and propagate aesthetics.

As Britain entered the new millennium, the UK Government's 2001 Denham Report on civil disorder advocated cultural activities to create social capital and improve social cohesion in 'fractured communities'.<sup>25</sup> The same healing narrative is epitomised by the popular feature film *Billy Elliot*, released one year earlier and adapted as a West End musical in 2005. Such commercial success stories are also cited as the key components of economic growth based on creativity and knowledge. In 2014 official statistics claimed that activities gathered under the heading of 'the creative industries' were worth £8 million per hour to the UK economy.<sup>26</sup> Indeed *Billy Elliot* may be seen as an iconic representation of the arts during the de-industrialisation of Britain and the ensuing crisis of organised labour. In many ways the *Billy Elliot* story shows the world of the arts, represented by the Royal Ballet School, succeeding where the world of "old Labour" had failed. Until the prospect of upward mobility via dance comes into view for the hero of the piece, all the adult male working class characters, mostly striking miners, are portrayed as semi-moronic chauvinists and philistines. The class slur is artfully cloaked by the redeeming power of creative play which, by the end, rescues the hero and the same male characters from themselves. The story has a real life equivalent in the Hartcliffe Boys' Dance Company in Bristol although their successes — as described by New

Labour politicians — seem to have had little effect on how Hartcliffe is represented in the local press where it exemplifies severe socio-economic problems.<sup>27</sup> However, if the arts are failing to deliver on the social promises of creative play, there still appear to be strong economic incentives to demonstrate the opposite by whatever means possible.

The shift of public attention from clearly economic contests towards actions which are expressed more at the level of culture is the object of considerable critical analysis: Mulhern (2000); Yudice (2003); Eagleton (2004); Dean (2009) all offer important and distinctive critiques that will be discussed in this thesis.<sup>28</sup> There is need for original research in this field because very little attention has been paid to the implications for organised labour. In Britain, are we witnessing the political unmaking, or disorganisation, of the working class in the country usually credited with the invention of trade unionism? Although a study of this kind cannot give a definitive answer, I do present comparative evidence which supports my hypothesis that the arts are substantially implicated in the unmaking of the working class. The thesis focuses on Britain and Venezuela; respectively, the governing rhetoric in these countries during the course of the study was strongly centrist, and strongly socialist. Historically and materially these are very different contexts for my main research questions concerning the need to differentiate artistic instrumentalism coming from above or below in the political order; and to understand more about the way the arts and politics speak to one another. Before discussing the aims and objectives of these questions it is worth considering the global conditions which also call for such an international comparative approach.

### **Timeliness**

Britain's future is widely considered to be a post-industrial one, with manufacturing and the exploitation of natural resources outsourced to the global marketplace. Like Chris Smith, many other politicians, analysts, and institutions such as Warwick University, also see the 'cultural industries' as a key to economic development.<sup>29</sup> Among those offering a less sanguine view is the influential analyst of technological-social change, Manuel Castells. Castells (2003) points out that a year of strenuous and intelligent labour by a small farmer in Mexico cannot compete with one hour of labour by a leading software programmer in the global north.<sup>30</sup> From this critical perspective we might see the faultlines of a global fracture which, via price speculation, pits knowledge and technology in some countries against labour and natural resources in others. The economist, Michael Hudson, argues that a 'global fracture' negates basic human needs and the long term economic value of natural resources.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, rather than looking forward to the smoother running of inequitable economic

exchanges, their geopolitical stability, and the transmogrification of economic conflicts into cultural conflicts and prejudices needs to be taken more seriously.

Environmentally minded economic analysts, such as Tim Jackson (2009) and Alf Hornborg (2013), see the dynamics of competitive globalisation threatening the planetary ecosystem. For its part, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2012) regards the cascading effects of climate instability as a threat to political stability. In turning attention to this problem the IPCC has theoretically divided the world into richer countries which have capacities for political and social ‘resilience’ and poorer ones which are likely to be radicalised and undergo extreme types of ‘transformation’ as a result of ecological crises.<sup>32</sup> However these predictions may have the effect of naturalising crises that are caused by failures of policy such as the devastation and loss of life caused by Hurricane Katrina.<sup>33</sup> The growing force of far-right politics in a variety of countries from Italy to India and the United States makes the IPCC’s division of the world on the basis of prosperity very questionable. Resilience may in fact depend on radically transforming the character of politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate an invidious political ordering in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These uncertainties are the background to this study of the arts and politics, and the reason for focusing on how these areas interact in countries whose governments were as ideologically different as those of the United Kingdom and Venezuela during the course of this research.

This study argues that the relationship between the arts and politics cannot be properly grasped without taking into account the patronage politics of what Bourdieu (1977) calls the good-faith economy. Bourdieu’s ethnographic research in Algeria shows how a variety of voluntary exchanges of capital and labour express or symbolise civic virtue. As we have seen above, the Clore Duffield Foundation spells out these virtues in terms of leadership qualities which it nurtures. What Bourdieu describes is the way patronage systems encourage ritualistic behaviour that appears to repudiate certain market transactions or values, and how certain elites are honour bound to lend support this shadow economy.<sup>34</sup> According to Bourdieu while the traditions and practices sustained by the good-faith economics may sometimes be regarded as a rejection of normal market behaviour, by distributing funds for these activities, the socio-economic elite courts respect if not popularity. In keeping with Bourdieu I refer to the good-faith economy to describe the broad influence upon society of gift-economics involving voluntary donations of capital and gifts of labour, skills or expertise. In this sense

one of the most important influences of monetary donations is to support a quasi-charitable sense of labour.

The development of philanthropic and charitable activities over the last three decades — not least as media events featuring open-air concerts and mass participation — suggests that the cultural and political significance of the good-faith economy is growing in the context of *patrimonial capitalism*. This is the term the economist Thomas Piketty (2013) uses to define the increasing concentration of wealth within the top one percent of the wealth scale; he calculates the returns on this wealth now outpace general growth. This concentration of wealth impedes fair and open competition in Piketty's analysis, and there is some evidence to suggest it already presents a resource for the expansion of private patronage in the arts.<sup>35</sup>

The activities which the good-faith economy supports are diverse, and we would expect them to differ from place to place; but notwithstanding their complexity, from Bourdieu's socio-economic perspective they are all inadequate forms of compensation for the concentration of wealth and power.<sup>36</sup> Good-faith economics are not at odds with capitalist economism but an extension of it, he argues. The logic underlying this is made explicit in the arguments of Lord Young of Graffam, Margaret Thatcher's trade and industry minister from 1987 to 1989. Writing on the virtues of an enterprise culture in 1992, he quotes a Director General of the St John's Ambulance Brigade who remarks that; 'Voluntary work is not the antithesis of popular capitalism (...) the same spirit of individualism moves both'<sup>37</sup> As Lord Young argues, the energy of the enterprise 'will bubble over into other activities' as companies become profitable. For public services to flourish they must take the back seat in an economy motivated by individualism and free-enterprise, thus Britain will avoid the sins he associates with welfarism and dependency culture. It is implied that the public should have *faith* in individual or corporate generosity at the local or national level and turn a blind eye to capitalist greed at the global level. In Young's rationalisation a rather vague idea of 'popular capitalism' becomes absorbed into the economic operations of cartels and monopolies; therefore harsh business competition is obscured by the rhetoric of the good-faith economy.

Still in keeping with the paradoxes of the good-faith economy some on the political right recognise 'the limits in the applicability of the market' and express nostalgia for a feudal social order.<sup>38</sup> *Ancien régime* virtues must be resurrected.<sup>39</sup> The position is clearly articulated in the Anglo-American academic volume *This Will Hurt, The Restoration of Virtue and Civic Order*, edited by Digby Anderson (1995), a priest in the Church of England, and founder of

the conservative think tank, the Social Affairs Unit.<sup>40</sup> From this standpoint the military virtues of self-sacrifice ‘dramatise the standards to be expected in all areas of public life’.<sup>41</sup> Treating public institutions like the military or the monarchy as if they were companies risks their destruction; they should be defended from market rationality. On the other hand when people fail to live up to respectable norms, it is argued that public services should not make life easier for them. Presaging the ‘Big Society’ policies adopted by David Cameron’s government some fifteen years later, if ordinary people are to be defended from market forces the task should be passed to communities and the voluntary sector.<sup>42</sup>

The authors of *This Will Hurt* take their arguments to their logical conclusions. Nevertheless, the anti-egalitarian ethics of the Social Affairs Unit are very difficult to swallow and for good reason. For example it is not sufficient to stigmatise single parents, their children must be singled out too.<sup>43</sup> The anonymity and pleasures of the modern city are also said to continually militate against the social virtues which prospered in rural society. Thus, in the conservative view, cities represent fundamentally problematic social spaces.<sup>44</sup> These are not particularly winning ideas but they translate into successful Conservative Party rhetoric concerning austerity and individual responsibility. Unintentionally, they demand that we consider what ‘civilisation’ means, a contested concept which I will come back to later. Conservative economic moralism meets a whole variety of responses in the arts but one that is particularly relevant to consider here reflects the suspicion of arts policies that came to the fore under New Labour. In 2013 the BBC reported the playwright and director Mark Ravenhill speaking at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. While opposing budget cuts he also opined: ‘Maybe the artist free of any relationship with any public funding body is freest of all? If I didn’t have to fill in forms, tick boxes, prove how good, nice, worthy me and my project are to a well meaning gatekeeper, maybe I’d make something better - more truthful, more radical?’<sup>45</sup> Ravenhill does not live under a dictatorship, so he does not really *have* to make the claims which he calls into some doubt. However like many people at work he may be contractually obliged to perform questionable duties as effectively as possible. As I argue in chapter three, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards the issue for the arts is not really a lack of truthfulness, rather it is obedience and submission to various types of contract.

For Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in 1762, ‘The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty.’<sup>46</sup> In modern, supposedly democratic, societies this is still a key issue. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century one of the dilemmas encountered in the arts is whether such a political reality means that the social

world is fractured, and representation should reflect the condition; or if the arts ought to reflect, or at least anticipate, unity. The problem was taken up by philosophers associated with the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research and is encapsulated in Theodor Adorno's (1903-1969) refutation of Hegel's (1770-1831) doctrine that truth is derived from the analysis of the whole; for Adorno, 'the whole is the false'.<sup>47</sup> A philosophical issue in artistic representation has now been carried over into reality via issues of social integration linked to participation in the arts.

### **The research questions: aims and objectives**

Two questions are at the centre of this study. One of them attempts to address as succinctly as possible the profoundly uncertain role of the arts in the general context I have described above: *What are the differences between artistic instrumentalism coming from above or below in the political order?* If participation in the arts benefits democratic society, then people must express their agency by putting the arts to use in different ways, and with different purposes in mind. An equally important question is: *How do the arts and politics speak to each other?* This line of enquiry relates more closely to the objectives of the study, which is to say its practical approach, in particular the kind of knowledge that can be gained through discourse analysis. The methodological intention behind these two questions is to open the field of investigation and allow for a reasonable development of aims in the course of research. It is possible to distinguish important political differences in artistic instrumentalism which are not confined to ideological rhetoric. However a regularity identified by this study is the distance, if not the complete break, between the discourses of artistic social engagement and the discourses of trade unionism. At the heart of much artistic social-engagement is a barely hidden disengagement which reiterates aspects of the good-faith economy. Therefore the faith placed in the arts from different, and even opposing quarters, needs to be examined as an issue of reflexivity about political and civic virtues. This is an objective of the thesis. The life-story interviews I have conducted with people working in the arts throw light on well-being claims made via the arts. Such accounts offer valuable insights about individual agency, i.e. matters of conduct and decision making which are related to the structural politics examined in the chapters. On the basis of historical and geopolitical scope I selected some of these reflexive narratives to write up and include as appendices. With this key thesis objective in mind, concerning reflexivity, what follows is an account of the development of aims through the chapters.

David Harding [**Appendix I**] born in 1937 stresses the security of his employment as a town artist in the 1960s and the socio-economic blessings enjoyed by his generation after the Second World War. Harding discusses these matters in terms of peace, economic security and the spiritual beliefs which influenced his life and sense of artistic social engagement.

Chapter two examines the contemporary scholarly literature relevant to artistic social engagement and shows the inversion of the kind of personal account given by Harding. In place of historical effects *on* artistic practices, the highly influential analytical discourse of well-being offers a means to speak about politics and policy via claims about the effects *of* artistic practices. As I have pointed out above, well-being claims made for the arts are very broad and they need to be examined systematically. Chapter two reviews key texts which consider the contribution of the arts to psychological, political, and economic forms of well-being. One or more of these three forms of well-being can be found at the roots of all approaches to artistic instrumentalism. The benefits claimed for the arts in each area need to be viewed with a much greater sense of proportionality. Two major issues are clear: first the instrumental efficacy attributed to the arts depends on a simplified view of relevant structural issues connected to the state of politics; this means that the connections between structural reforms and the success or failure of ameliorative activities are played down. Secondly, these advocacy discourses give an especially virtuous impression of creative activities and artistic meanings; the arts appear uncontaminated by the complex structural problems they are said to ameliorate.

Esther Salamon [**Appendix II**] born in 1951 describes the development of her egalitarian ethics from her childhood which were to guide her work in participatory arts projects from the 1980s. However when Salamon joined Helix Arts in Newcastle, an organisation devoted to the support of participatory arts projects, she became involved in brokering funds from foundations with very different family and philosophical origins to her own. Salamon's account points to the way different ideas of virtue are combined in artistic practices.

Chapter three traces the roots of these virtuous discourses back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century; specifically to the tense socio-economic relations between the landed aristocracy and the rising middle classes empowered by commerce. The aristocratic patronage of philosophy spawned aesthetics; a branch of philosophy still inflected by Hobbessian thought about Leviathan powers. Western aesthetics, I argue, reflect the terms of political courtship between

sections of the aristocracy and the middle classes in Europe; a courtship which sacrificed peasants' economic rights. The profound uncertainties of the status quo in the 18<sup>th</sup> century demanded new forms of Statecraft which explicitly called for the sort of virtuous partnerships that were responsible for the establishment of various secular learned societies, museums and universities. The arts still need to be seen in the historical context of such exchanges in the good-faith economy which, today, court political respect and economic obedience for patrimonial capitalism. In the conclusion of this chapter I consider what this might mean for the perpetuation of class inequalities and I advance the hypothesis that discourses of the arts are implicated in the political unmaking of the working class.

Leigh French [**Appendix III**], born in 1969, editor of Glasgow based Variant magazine on 'cross currents in culture' since 1996, thinks the arts are used to beautify the ideology of the market. In contrast to uncritical portrayals of artistic virtue, French compares his experiences of life behind this flattering veil to working in 'a viper's nest' yet he also says the arts provide space for free thinking.

Chapter four takes up this paradox from the perspective of social science methodology and considers issues stemming from sociological poetics originated in the Russian school of literary and cultural analysis associated with Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). What is meant by 'the political order' referred to in my research questions? I argue that we must take into account complex affinities with different social structures; e.g. legal systems and trade union organisation. Despite their potentially compatible purposes, in terms of justice, such power structures are often in conflict with one another because of collective or private ethics, which carry vital meanings for different forms of agency.<sup>48</sup> I consider ways in which relevant discourses in the arts and humanities, and in social science, simplify feelings for social structures and feelings for social agency. To address this problem at the level of method I stress the necessity of an international comparative approach in order to test ideas about political differences in artistic instrumentalism. To avoid artificially pigeon-holing organisations or practices, a range of cases needs to be combined with an intensive focus on the development of strategic reasoning about artistic social engagement. Discursive shifts at this level are influenced by organisational networks and the development of ideas via these networks must be explored.



I argue for what I call ‘discourse analysis with the people in’, an approach reflected in my use of biographical narratives. These co-authored narratives are based on interviews and email correspondence about the content of each text. The moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (1998) argues that we understand ourselves in moral terms through a stock of oral and written stories; and we construct conceptions of universal goods in such stories.<sup>49</sup> The biographical narratives in this study show that aesthetic and political virtues are interrelated; the possibility of strengthening these connections, or giving them structure, influences people’s careers and, in some instances, may be a guiding factor in their lives.

However this process needs to be questioned, both through the exploration of the socio-historical contexts, and when interviewing. The danger of social research that only treats people as proper subjects who speak back when it comes to the dissemination of findings is that the deferral of possible discussions and argument actually reinforces inequality and a reductive classification of themes and interests in academic research. Nevertheless I argue that there are important limits to these dialogical and reflexive approaches which tend to come to the fore in social science research grounded in the issue of equality. Although not always made crystal clear by researchers, equality is in fact a key to the scientific claims of social research. Rather than watering the issue down for fear of appearing polemical, what needs to be addressed are the limits of critical reflexivity on the one hand and the relative power of habitual routines on the other. Such an approach is vital if critical research is to develop its aims and make practical egalitarian proposals.<sup>50</sup> I return to this matter in the concluding chapter and in the final appendix which discuss possible courses of action for trade unions and reforms in arts funding in light of the thesis findings.

Chapter five gives a close-up view of the methodological approach outlined above. It focuses on the development of strategic reasoning at Helix Arts in Newcastle. During New Labour governments in Britain the strategy of organisation was increasingly based on the conception of community. The chapter examines this rationale through a conversation with Toby Lowe, born in 1973, a manager at Helix who was particularly concerned with the idea of community-forming narratives. Over time people responsible for organising Helix projects have engaged with various governmental programmes, justice system initiatives, and charitable/voluntary sector networks. Although their experiences point to serious ethical tensions with the routines imposed by power structures, from its foundation, feelings for agency in Helix seem to have been orientated by the good-faith economy. In this arena the

discourses of community have greater currency than those of class or labour. The concept of exploitation is often superseded by ideas of inclusion and opportunity. From the organisational image that Helix creates for itself, class-consciousness emerges as a social narrative destined to belong to someone else.

My conversation with Lowe points to a managerial frame for artistic participation that is brokered according to a powerful combination of government and voluntary sector discourses. Chapter six investigates the background of this historical dynamic in Britain from the 1960s onwards. The discourses of political or civic virtue in the arts shifted towards localism and ideas of community. The combination of factors examined in this chapter include: the widespread disillusionment with industrialism; the interest among systems theorists in the development of spiritual rewards for labour which would create socio-economic equilibrium without a redistribution of power; the involvement of leading left-wing artists and writers in national and international cultural activities organised by the US Central Intelligence Agency; and the disempowering effect on many trade unions of the technological revolution promised by Harold Wilson (1916-1995) in 1963. All these factors have a bearing on the main case examined in this chapter, the Craigmillar Festival Society in Edinburgh. The creation of the CFS was sparked off by the very effective criticism from the mothers of pupils concerning the lack of music education in the local school. These mothers were then encouraged to create the CFS. However in doing so they also retreated from a key egalitarian issue in the education system. Ironically, by forming a multi-faceted arts and social welfare alternative they effectively let the State off the hook and moved closer towards good-faith discourses of social action. Unlike Helix discussed above, class-consciousness was a narrative that belonged to the CFS and the discourse of exploitation was embraced by the organisation's activities which, in many ways, were a grassroots expression of the labour movement's cultural outlook. However this chapter gives a nuanced account of the gender issues that have been overlooked in accounts of the CFS, and internal divisions within the organisation about the instrumental successes claimed for its artistic activities.

Considering his experiences as an arts development officer with the Scottish Arts Council/Creative Scotland, Femi Folorunso [**Appendix IV**] born in Nigeria in 1958, criticises funding procedures and speaks of ritualised acts that characterise artistic social engagement. Folorunso thinks State failures provide the opportunities for such modern rituals.

By all measures Labour governments in the 1960s and 1970s failed to live up to policy commitments regarding egalitarian reform of education. Given this failure chapter seven examines one of the most visible aesthetic responses to the same issue that was faced by Craigmillar mothers in the 1960s; this time in a patently top-down articulation of artistic social engagement. Aimed at providing a musical education in deprived areas El Sistema youth orchestras, founded in Venezuela in the 1970s, have provided an international model of artistic social engagement backed up by lending banks, political elites, and by the supposedly objective findings of public funded research projects. This chapter examines this nexus of support both in Venezuela and in Scotland, where Sistema Scotland operates with a great deal of political credibility. Sistema's strategic reasoning is overtly motivational and meritocratic, 'play' is turned into something closer to work training lending credibility to an invidious ideological discourse of 'strivers versus skivers'.<sup>51</sup> In multi-cultural societies, Sistema's overriding commitment to the rituals and repertoire of the European classical orchestra, as well as occasional efforts to incorporate other traditions within the form, are seen to be problematic. Yet the organisation's claim to provide a high quality music education has gone unquestioned in official research. There are also a number of major social and educational problems in Venezuela which by most measures got worse rather than better with the increased support for El Sistema style social action. Despite harsh vociferous criticism of Venezuelan socialist government policy over the past two decades, a remarkable silence prevailed about the role of what I show to be a very conservative Government Organised Non Governmental Organisation (a GONGO) in the context of Venezuelan cultural politics. In this chapter the good-faith economy is shown to be a sophisticated and profitable arena for the development of international loans and political clientelism. The cases discussed in this chapter suggest that artistic instrumentalism ought to be questioned more rigorously with a view to potential damages to other areas of policy.

In the chapters outlined above the political and artistic activities of organisations such as Helix, CFS, or Sistema appear to be fairly clearly distinguished. In the case of CFS a number of community welfare activities were also run separately. Crossovers between politics and the arts were confined to political or social issues that are merely represented in creative projects. Some organisations are included in this study precisely because they question orthodox distinctions and definitions of artistic, cultural, or political work. Janette Rodríguez, born 1964, and Oscar Sotillo, born 1968, [**Appendix V**] are founding members of La Mancha, an artistic and literary collective based in Caracas. Like Variant magazine mentioned above, La

Mancha exemplifies an avant-garde approach to artistic instrumentalism, the object of which is the politics of art and culture rather than a largely externalised social field.

In chapter eight I examine key debates about contemporary capitalism which have an important bearing on how these and other forms of artistic social engagement are to be assessed, especially in the context of the good-faith economy. This concluding chapter revisits the three key areas of psychological, political, and economic areas of well-being that are distinguished in chapter two's review of artistic advocacy literature. Chapter eight examines these three key areas in relation to debates surrounding Boltanski and Chiapello's (2007) *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, a structural account of the difficult relationship between trade unions and left-wing parties on the one hand, and the emancipatory artistic ideas on the other. Boltanski and Chiapello call the latter the 'artistic critique of capitalism' which, they argue, was spread by the student movements of 1968 and in the subsequent decades, became an elite psychological discourse. Nevertheless an increasingly pious disengagement from trade unionism and basic needs, which is seen from the cases in this thesis, is not in itself a reason to believe that the artistic critique is exhausted. The factors supporting the disengagement need to be understood. Indeed when we move to the area of political science the psychological tradition strengthens the critique of the arts as a source of critical voices. Here I engage with Dean's (2007) critique of 'communicative capitalism' which stresses 'frantic' participation and the neglect of political organisation and democratic decision making. However Dean leaves many unanswered questions about the forces driving new ideas of political agency. In relation to economic analyses of contemporary capitalism I compare and contrast two US analyses of a burgeoning creative and co-operative gift-economy. In the first account by Gregory Sholette (2011) the spirit of avant-garde collectivism resides in the art world's surplus labour and still has the capacity to subvert the art world and produce non-capitalist gifts of resistance. In the second account from Jeremy Rifkin (2014), technological changes are leading towards a workerless world of networked 'prosumers', producing, exchanging and sharing in a cooperative and gift-orientated economy facilitated by the internet. These accounts (from Dean; Sholette; Rifkin) overlook the good-faith economy; however critical analysis of Sholette and Rifkin reveals much about the development of gift-economics within contemporary capitalism. Overall this chapter argues that artistic instrumentalism is politically exhausted by its own generosity which, among other things, detracts from employment conditions directly relevant to people such as Sholette and others working in the arts and higher education.

In the second part of chapter eight I argue that the so called ‘new spirit’ is not new and I discuss the findings of this thesis. Art and politics speak to each other using a language of well-being partly because virtue entails modesty; in many contexts it is easier to transfer resources by arguing that actions are conducive to some form of individual or social well-being than it is to say that actions are good or virtuous. This shadow discourse in the arts belongs to the good-faith economy; particularly the moral ambiguity associated with financial donations made to advance political influence and protect accumulated wealth. Although it is still possible to distinguish artistic instrumentalism coming from above or below in the political order the good-faith economy reinforces political fragility and dependency. Ultimately, I argue, this problem, which dates back to the cultural institution building of the 18th century, is more significant than important differences I can identify in approaches to artistic instrumentalism today. In reflecting on my research findings, the arguments given by Hugh Jenkins, (the Labour Minister for the Arts mentioned above) deserve to be taken seriously. According to Jenkins, artists are no less vulnerable to political manipulation than anyone else; therefore he stressed the need to substantially reduce the influence of a spiritual aristocracy and to advance democracy in cultural decision making. Similarly I argue that if participation in the arts matters, then what is needed is serious and sustained public participation in funding decisions. Some of the practical challenges are discussed in relation to Dan Hind’s (2010) proposals for media reform [**Appendix VI**].

### **The original contribution of the study and its key concepts**

The central theme of Boltanski and Chiapello’s (2007) study mentioned above is the deconstruction of social classes in France since 1968. The authors point out the role of academic scholarship in assisting this process. Despite the broader significance of the connections which they raise, subsequent scholarship of international scope has tended to focus on appraising social practices in the arts according to theories of artistic autonomy (e.g. Rockhill & Watts 2009; Rancière 2010) or through the interpretation of the development of socially creative critiques of contemporary capitalism (e.g. Sholette 2011; Raunig, Ray, & Wuggenig 2011; Bishop 2012). Despite the attention given to artistic instrumentalism in such discussions of political aesthetics and tactical media there is a striking lacuna in research. The distancing, or complete disengagement, from trade unionism in the discourses of participation and social engagement in the arts has been overlooked. There is a certain density in the theoretical and philosophical interpretation of the social significance of artistic trends and forms of expression in the publications cited above. Yet the organisation of labour in the arts

is simplified, sometimes grotesquely so, and the politics of trade unionism, if they appear at all, are treated very lightly.<sup>52</sup> In the course of this study the deeper socio-historical aspect of this scholarly disengagement was increasingly evident in interviews, participant observation and from the examination of various primary sources. Rather than approaching the issue as a simple reflection of ideological or political standpoints, this thesis explores the historical shaping of the good-faith economy which encompasses what may appear to be radically different standpoints.

### Enlightened Despotism

This thesis argues that the roots of the lacuna mentioned above are in the *enlightened despotism* of the 18th century. Despotism is, of course, a pejorative term that describes unaccountable governance by tyrannical individuals or elites. Although the conception of enlightened despotism is contested by some who see it as a contradiction in terms, chapter three shows its historical validity and continuity with what is often called ‘soft power’ today.<sup>53</sup> In examining the patronage of aesthetics in the 18th century and the development of Statecraft in Europe, the situation of the arts as a site of socio-political courtship – one which involves intellectual labour generally – can be more readily seen. Piketty's (2013) model of patrimonial capitalism mentioned above is also suggestive of despotic powers in so far as substantive forms of socio-economic contest appear to have been eroded in the course of the upward distribution of wealth he analyses. This thesis argues that a key to the level of consensus enjoyed by this economic order is an arena of courtship created in the arts which bears the intellectual hallmarks of enlightened despotism and the good-faith economy. In recent decades a combination of political, technocratic, artistic and academic discourses encouraged good-faith alliances to be built. Ideas about socio-economic agency, advocacy, and progress that bypass critical employment issues have been promoted. Policies for public ownership were marginalised, or abandoned, giving way to the fear of private business disinvestment or capital flight. If, as I argue, this nexus of discourses and policies entails the deconstruction, or unmaking of the organised working class, an important element of democratic development and collective self-belief is being eroded. Among the possible knock-on effects of the disempowerment of collective bargaining is the rise of far-right politics; this already calls into question the IPCC's neat prognosis for a world divided into poor countries which will undergo radical political changes because of environmental pressures and richer countries that will enjoy greater systemic resilience.

### Good-faith

The idea of the arts as ‘a pillar of liberty’, in the words of Dwight Eisenhower (1890-1969), still sounds plausible to many ears.<sup>54</sup> However this thesis examines the arts as a pillar of the *good-faith economy* or *good-faith economics*, the arena of transactions I show to be more closely related to unaccountable and unelected discretionary powers (despotism) and to obedience, than to freedom. The book by the playwright Gregory Motton (2009), *Helping Themselves - The Left Wing Middle Classes in Theatre and the Arts*, argues that the personal frustrations of this branch of the left are played out as pseudo-political forms which have palpably failed to counter social injustice or the typical class hierarchy within left leaning artistic production itself. Motton’s critique is bound to be controversial but this is a book which seems to call for a broader analysis of the fracturing of political or civic virtues, the coherency of which may be a key to political power. As this thesis shows, responsibility for the erosion of egalitarian policies cannot be pinned on the middle class, mostly privately schooled, writers and artists criticised by Motton for their high-handed detachment from the life and experience of the working class.<sup>55</sup> There are deeper political and philosophical issues to grapple with concerning good-faith in a licensed intellectual autonomy enjoyed by the few; not least how the concepts of art and culture are used in the first place.

### Art

As its title suggests this thesis looks broadly across the social practices that fall under the category of ‘the arts’; however what is used to distinguish these practices socially and politically is the idea of *art*. Hitler’s Third Reich and other 20th century totalitarian regimes made the link between art and power an unsightly one.<sup>56</sup> In the early days of the Soviet Union the poet and former trade unionist Aleksei Gastev (1882-1939) regarded the Central Institute of Labour, which he founded in 1920, as his last work of art.<sup>57</sup> The institute successfully encouraged the importation of Taylorist labour practices from the United States to the Soviet Union. Gastev’s idea was that the machine-like work demanded by capitalist industry could also be used to build a socialist utopia, even if the whole project was ‘enslaved’ to foreign capital.<sup>58</sup> With such histories of art and politics in mind many scholars do not want art to be confused with propaganda, entertainment, or commerce.<sup>59</sup> These are just three of the many exceptions made in interpretations of what counts as art.<sup>60</sup> There are so many tenuous definitions of the defining qualities of art that it is tempting to see only a subjective value judgement, as does the anti-elitist literary scholar, John Carey (2005). However in place of ‘art’ what Carey leaves standing is reflexivity.

Clearly people use various ideas about art, and artistic value, to do things. Not all of them are processes with obvious legal or political objectives, but all artistic practices have these implications even if only to promote the idea of art itself. Given this complexity I believe that art is at its clearest as a closely related set of languages in action, or discourses that are increasingly widely deployed for the purposes of recognition. I do not separate art and politics by consigning the first to matters of speech and the second to matters of power.<sup>61</sup> Art and politics are much more interwoven, not least in censorship laws. Through discourse analysis we gain a clearer understanding of how people in the arts deal with power and to what extent genres and aesthetic traditions might be a significant factor. As much as possible I have tried to avoid the pitfalls of research which focuses on the interpretation of artefacts which cannot speak back. Whatever democratic benefits the arts might foster is not to be found in artefacts, but in the controversy about what really constitutes the political significance of the arts in relation to a wider culture and civilisation.

### Culture and Civilisation

Culture is another infamously slippery term and civilisation is often regarded as an ideologically loaded one. Discourses of art do not make the problems of taxonomy here any clearer. As discussed in the next chapter it is often supposed that the arts foster reflexivity, whereas culture is the area of habits, routine, spoken language and difficult to define collective feelings or sensibilities. The latter may give civilisations a distinctive character, but unlike intellectual capacities, they are not regarded as a key to their success. This often implicit distinction is used to rhetorically construct an artistic realm that is intellectually sovereign over culture and everyday communication.<sup>62</sup> The arts, it is suggested, are more thought provoking and a key to the protection of civilisation. Calling such a rationale into question may even run against first-hand experience. Over time when I worked mainly as a photographer, people occasionally told me about how they had been made socially aware, or even irrevocably politicised, by photo books and documentary films. In some cases these artefacts also attain the status of art. To anyone producing words or images these appreciative responses come as a welcome confirmation of the value of creative skills that might help them influence others. What tends to be neglected is the social readiness to be sensitised by images or words or by particular genres of representation. These circulate with increasing frequency in modern societies, and the issue of reception is a complicated one. The viewer's sense of history, place, and situation alongside possibly unconscious influences, – or what the cultural scholar Raymond Williams (1921-1988) called 'structures of feeling' – mean that some may



respond strongly to messages and meanings which pass other people by as relatively unremarkable expressions of a lamentable and increasingly complex human condition.<sup>63</sup> It is only through social and institutional processes that artefacts, performances, and genres acquire critical significance and value as the marks of a civilisation. For these reasons I define culture as *communication and process*, a definition that I believe would encompass any reasonable definition of art.

From this standpoint the value claims that are made by labelling something as art need to be measured against the very limited participation in decision making processes which determine creative priorities, their institutional contexts and political structuring. The discursive asymmetries raise issues about democratic accountability in culture to be addressed shortly. Here it is necessary to recover a critical sense of civilisation which has perhaps fallen out of fashion in academic writing as the seemingly more neutral, but often ill-defined term, culture, came to the fore.

*The Civilising Process*, by Norbert Elias (1897-1990), is a classic work of historical sociology first published in 1939. A refugee from Nazi Germany, Elias had every reason to wonder about the basis of European civilisation. He studied the development of restraints on violence, particularly on counter-productive feuding between elites, and the beginnings of politically negotiated forms of inter-dependency central to the formation of modern States. Elias tracks the increased propensity for external aggression, as unified groups and proto-nationalities become confident of their civilisation's superiority. However, in the wake these often aggressive figurations, the working classes developed their own chains of interdependency and an international consciousness. Unfortunately Elias (2000) pays little attention to workers' movements except as the object of fear among the ruling classes. Nevertheless his argument that socio-economic systems such as the family, the city, or capitalism, communism and feudalism are figurations comparable to dances is an important one if we are to appreciate what is at stake in working class traditions of solidarity. As Elias argues dances are mobile and changing structures created by individuals by observing one another socially.<sup>64</sup> As the character of work has changed under the influences of technology and global competition, a marketplace of ideas has also emerged about new figurations, often more appealing than workplace solidarity. The attempt to get beneath the theoretical abstractions evident in the names given to social political orders, and the notion of civilisation itself, seems vital if we are to distinguish actual political capacities in the arts from claims made about their inherent meanings and power to communicate civilised values.<sup>65</sup>

### Cultural Democracy and Social Democracy

In his book *Totalitarian Art*, the art historian Igor Golomstock (1990) gives graphic illustrations of the poetic correspondence between art and politics. Broadly in line with the compensatory function Williams (1962) sees, in the way the conceptual abstractions of art or culture were used in Britain, Golomstock shows that art 'highlights what is lacking (...) in the social system'.<sup>66</sup> When agriculture was increasingly mechanized in Nazi Germany traditional peasant society was glorified in the German art of the time. When agricultural machinery was lacking in the Soviet Union there was an abundance of tractors and combine harvesters and other machinery to be seen in paintings and films. In both these contexts, where the political autonomy of working class had been abolished, artists were also ready to portray labour as heroic, noble and joyful. In pointing out this tendency to gloss over social and political realities I am not suggesting that the arts are craven and largely subservient, regardless of the political system they inhabit. Moreover even authoritarian political systems invite artistic submission to their symbolic order, they are loathed to be seen demanding it. If submission was always demanded, a system would command little respect and be of little political value.<sup>67</sup> Governments that take direct control of culture tend to be weaker rather than stronger, and from the epoch of enlightened despotism onwards one solution has been to create and share power with a spiritual aristocracy. I argue this approach involving subtle forms of social courtship has not made the arts and cultural policy more accountable, or sensitive, to society.

Jenkins's rueful sense of a spiritual aristocracy mentioned above only really makes sense in relation to an important line of critique which recognises art as a variety of religion, or at least a spiritual alternative to religion. The assumed power of the arts to uplift the spirit might also be compared to the differences between pantheism and monotheism.<sup>68</sup> In his book *Culture and the Death of God*, the Marxian literary theorist, Terry Eagleton (2014), critiques the modern discourse of culture which, he argues, is responsible for alternative belief systems no less problematic than monotheistic religion. Freedoms may be tested and deeply felt in activities and ways of life that come under the category of religion or culture, but as Eagleton rightly cautions: 'No act can be more free than the decision to relinquish one's liberty. In making this choice the hero pays homage to freedom at the same time as he bows to the Law. He is thus set above all vulgar determinism'.<sup>69</sup> I quote this sentence not to reiterate Eagleton's project to put culture in its place and rescue the belief in God from the task religion traditionally performs, namely to validate the political order.<sup>70</sup> The point is that whether this

task is performed by religious or secular institutions and bodies, every political order requires a range of cultural structures to which people adhere and voluntarily obey. Chapter three examines theories of structure and agency and argues that structures are fractured by class, and that class is fractured by different ideas of political agency which even the most committed egalitarians hardly agree upon. Under these circumstances the issue of cultural democracy, namely accountability of cultural policy to society as a whole, is increasingly pressing.

There appears to be greater space for criticism and cultural autonomy in social democratic or liberal orders where the working class is politically empowered. People in the arts such as McGrath (quoted at the outset of this chapter), who aligned himself with the labour movement, helped sustain this political sphere in 20th century Britain. The political flowering of the arts and letters in the United States of the 1930s is another example of a working class social movement making room for changes to the cultural status quo. We may think about these dynamic relations, which appear to support the development of aesthetic virtues, as the autonomy of scale. In other words, the degree of autonomy in culture is derived from the scale of the pressures for political liberties in general. Nevertheless cultural organisations which demonstrate what was lacking in a social system, and which gave due consideration to the causes and consequences, both in expression and in social organisation, have rarely endured. The ill-fated workers' photography movement in the United States, closed down after the Second World War, shows that political flexibility in the sphere of culture cannot be equated with cultural democracy.<sup>71</sup>

One of the possible effects of the lack cultural democracy is that it becomes more difficult to address culture sceptically as an arena of compensation for social, economic and political losses. *The Expediency of Culture*, is a book by George Yúdice, (2003) a professor of American Studies. Yúdice is agnostic about the benefits of cultural activism and a politics demanding recognition of identity. His study suggests that a range of genres and traditions become too easily geared to middle-class ideas of development assisting the State to 'cast off' social responsibilities.<sup>72</sup> The new organisations evoke an ethos of self-help and pseudo political autonomy which adds up to what Yúdice calls the 'NGOization of culture' which deals in cultural stereotypes.<sup>73</sup> This participatory 'alibi for neoliberalism' makes certain process-orientated art projects such as InSITE Arts Festival on the Mexico-US border of more interest to Yúdice.<sup>74</sup> He notes high level support from organisations such as the

Rockefeller Foundation, and that such artistic interventions are geared to ‘the advancement of art as an institution’; yet in trying to ‘set off chemical reactions among publics’ Yúdice also argues they go beyond stereotypes and air questions of cultural labour and cultural policy.<sup>75</sup> Finally he calls on the antiglobalisation movement ‘to turn its attention to its own collaboration with the globalized civil society of NGOs and weed out the appropriation of the public good by the new regime of accumulation based on intellectual and cultural work.’<sup>76</sup>

This thesis argues that the distance which the good-faith economy creates between participatory or process-orientated artistic projects, and trade union politics, means that both spheres are presently ill-positioned to address intellectual and cultural labour or cultural policy.<sup>77</sup> In terms of envisaging political solutions, calling on something as disparate and ideologically complex as the antiglobalisation movement to solve the problem is to kick the issue into the long grass.<sup>78</sup> The politics of intellectual and cultural labour demand a greater sense of critical reflexivity on the part of academics and others working in education.

## **Conclusion**

In this introductory chapter I have explained the materialist meaning of the title *Fractured Culture*, as an effect of the socio-economic structuring of inequality. Language alone tells us that culture is not a seamless whole, and I have suggested that the social processes which create value also stratify culture. Capitalism compounds these fractures. According to classical economic theories, the general well-being that can be derived from competitive markets should not be confused with personal virtues; and the idea that greed might in fact be good is only an exaggerated expression of arguments.<sup>79</sup> The study of the good-faith economy exposes a great paradox, namely that material self-denials — which increasingly involve the economic colonisation of free time — are among the factors which make a system based on greed more acceptable. Eagleton points out that ‘economic activity [under capitalism] is without much built-in spiritual purpose, that meaning has to be imported from elsewhere and the join is awkwardly apparent.’<sup>80</sup> In the 20th century, aesthetic discourses were increasingly ‘imported’ in this sense but the joins may not be so apparent as they are to Eagleton, a Marxian Christian.

In defining what I mean by *art* and *culture* (in terms of communication and value creating processes), I have introduced and clarified other troublesome but significant concepts in this thesis. Other important concepts such as meritocracy will be discussed in the context of case studies. In this chapter I pointed out the problems in theorising social forms of capital,

particularly in distinguishing their theoretical possession from subtle issues of clientelism. Although Bourdieu's sociology is not immune to the analytical problems, his work on the patronage politics of the good-faith economy is a vital step towards a realistic assessment of class politics of culture, and the lack of democratic discussion about the promises of the arts.

Not all the scholars mentioned in this introduction draw directly on the tradition of sociological poetics to be discussed in chapter four; however the works I have cited by Bourdieu, Eagleton, Elias, Golomstock, Yudice, Williams, all demonstrate the sensitivity to sociological poetics which is the theoretical backbone of this thesis. The varied appearances of social harmony, or cultural fracture and political opposition created in the arts cannot be simply aligned to actual social practices, or political parties and movements, anymore than philosophical doctrines of aesthetic autonomy and artistic freedom could be boiled down to liberalism. Rather, sociological poetics suggests that the arts represent more complicated social processes, figurations and alliances. Indeed, historically, the belief that true art tends towards autonomy or independence has preceded some of the most unexpected compromises and acts of submission.<sup>81</sup> The study contributes to knowledge about such twists and turns by examining the development of the good-faith economy.

In many countries a tenuous consensus has been constructed for the inequalities associated with patrimonial capitalism. Among the factors that must be taken into account in explaining such a consensus is the fear of business disinvestment or capital flight from States if they pursue progressive taxation, or put other sanctions on the accumulation of capital. This fear can only be reinforced by the decline of public enterprise. However, nations such as Venezuela, in possession of valuable natural resources on undisputed territory, are potentially in a better bargaining position when facing the power of international capital to influence policy. So in comparing Britain and oil-rich Venezuela in this study, there is a tangible economic factor that would justify the anticipation of policy differences which go beyond ideological rhetoric. Yet, as I show in both countries, artistic activities appear to be an ideologically effective counter strategy on the part of financial capital; a mixture of loans, public investments and private charitable support, seem to negate the possibilities for constructing an egalitarian public education system of the kind created in Nordic countries such as Finland. Moreover what is left in place is a harsh competition on the terrain of educational achievements or qualifications (human capital), and social connections or bonds (social capital). From such highly competitive contexts, a considerable amount of scholarly literature has emerged in recent years arguing that forms of well-being are derived from

artistic activities. In the next chapter I examine the evidence for such beneficial connections in Anglo-American literature.

As mentioned above Alasdair MacIntyre (1998) argues that our conceptions of universal goods are constructed through oral and written stories.<sup>82</sup> One way this thesis aims to contribute to our knowledge of the good-faith economy is through the biographical narratives starting with David Harding's story in the following appendix. Like the case of the Craigmillar Festival Society discussed in chapter six, Harding's account recalls a period in Britain when the arts were becoming more incorporated into governance and public services, his story of artistic social engagement stands in contrast to less secure and often temporary interventions supported by the good-faith economy today. These biographical narratives demonstrate the ways aesthetic and political virtues are interrelated; moreover the possibility of strengthening the connections, and giving them structure, seems to influence people's careers and in some instances may be a guiding factor in accounting for politically or socially important decisions in their lives. They also show how the compensations I have introduced in this chapter come about first of all for the individual.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Making Art Popular — Or Making Popular Art' [1984] in McGrath (2002), p.131.

<sup>2</sup> Founded in Scotland 1971, 7:84 was closed down in 2008, two years after the Scottish Arts Council had withdrawn core funding. 7:84 (England) closed in 1984 also as a result of a loss of funding.

<sup>3</sup> See Dorling (2011), p.141.

<sup>4</sup> For these reasons the term 'a common culture' used by left-wing intellectuals such as Raymond Williams (1921-1988) and Edward Said (1935-2003) to articulate their political hopes was called into question by others on the left. See Williams (1989), p.193. Ironically, however, experiences of a highly stratified society where the classes hardly mixed, sometimes lends meaning to hopes of a common culture. See David Harding's account of his childhood in Appendix I. Similar experiences are described in detail, and with some humour, in Jonathan Rose's, *The Intellectual Life of The British Working Classes*. Among different working class communities, an organic regime of equality existed at least until the 1950s. It could be starkly conservative but it was also antagonistic towards claims to intellectual merit. Flora Thompson (1876-1947) — author of the classic semi-autobiographical trilogy, *Lark Rise to Candleford* — reflects on her humble origins in Oxfordshire, and writes of the people she knew; 'their ideal for themselves and their children was to keep the level of the normal. To them outstanding ability was no better than outstanding stupidity.' What makes Rose's book an important one is that he shows the serious side of such suspicions, and how they cannot be simply reduced to a manifestation of philistinism among people who "know their place." Rose describes a

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regime of collective advancement, through cooperation and mutual education. Reading aloud and discussion was encouraged and this was based on a fairly omnivorous cultural menu voraciously consumed and digested by many. In Rose's words, 'the great virtue of mutual improvement was a general sharing of knowledge; its great drawback was a corollary distrust of private study which was regarded as selfish and unneighbourly.' See Rose (2002) pp.81-93.

<sup>5</sup> See W.H. Mallock's [1898] 'Aristocracy and Evolution: A Study in the Rights, the Origin, and the Social Functions of the Wealthier Classes', in Muller (1997), pp.213-221.

<sup>6</sup> For Mallock ideas of 'greatness' ought to be inverted. He quotes verse by Robert Browning (1812-1889): 'The mean man with the little thing to do / Sees it and does it;/ The great man with the great end to pursue / Dies ere he knows it.' As a result Mallock argues that greatness really stems from a certain narrowness of mind. Ibid. p.218-219.

<sup>7</sup> Statecraft is a term used to describe the related political skills associated with internal governance and managing international relations.

<sup>8</sup> For example Tony Coult writes of Welfare State International; 'It is the Imagination, above all, that powers all the processes of rational and creative action that make up social living, and the transforming power of the imagination that makes change possible. Without it there can be no learning and no morality. See Coult and Kershaw (1990), p.13.

<sup>9</sup> See Wilson (2009).

<sup>10</sup> See Belfiore (2009).

<sup>11</sup> See Mowlah, Niblett, Blackburn and Harris (2014). Available online at <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/exploring-value-arts-and-culture/value-arts-and-culture-people-and-society> (Last accessed, December 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.p 7.

<sup>13</sup> 'Over-claiming' is the term used by Susan Jones (pseudonym) who has a career community education in Scotland and was interviewed for this study about her experiences of arts projects.

<sup>14</sup> See *Arts and Culture Strategy Consultation, Online survey response*, March 2016, (Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Northern Ireland Government) p.19. <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/consultation-strategy-culture-arts-2016-2026-online-survey-response> (Last accessed December 2016)

<sup>15</sup> Smith (1998), p.145.

<sup>16</sup> See 'Generous Leadership', Sue Hoyle, *Arts Professional* (16 January 2014) <http://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/270/article/generous-leadership> (Last accessed December 2016)

<sup>17</sup> Jenkins (1979), p.215.

<sup>18</sup> Jenkins does not use the term spiritual aristocracy but there can be no doubt that he is speaking about one. Among the primary sources concerning the subject Emile Boutmy (1835-1906), the founder of Sciences Po in Paris, gives an explicitly political account of the power of such groups based, according to him, on personal merit and talent. In 1872 Boutmy argued that, '... the upper classes can preserve their political hegemony only by invoking the rights of the most capable. As traditional upper-class prerogatives crumble, the wave of democracy will encounter a second rampart,

built on eminently useful talents, superiority that commands prestige, and abilities of which society cannot sanely deprive itself.' Quoted in Piketty (2014), p.487.

<sup>19</sup> Whereas Smith (1998) collapses the arts into the general category of the creative industries Jenkins (1979) argued that investments in arts treasures motivated by tax avoidance damage investment in the rest of the economy, and result in a 'disfigured society.' See Jenkins (1979) p.146.

<sup>20</sup> Glennerster (2011), p.3.

<sup>21</sup> Keeley (2007), p.103.

<sup>22</sup> Rattanasripanya (2011) p.225.ff.

<sup>23</sup> An example of the social process is the English 'metaphysical' poetry of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which uses dazzling word play to compare otherwise incomparable things. This effectively turns a poem into a puzzle for the reader. Early on, shrewd criticism recognised the social function in such 'strong-lined' verse; it served to distinguish those readers who understood and enjoyed its illusions from those who could not. The much vaunted 'wits' of the age who appreciated the new poetic devices were in many ways the archetypes of modern individualism; models of men and women who are supposedly in command of their own minds and personalities, in other words a spiritual aristocracy. See Gardner (ed.) (1985), pp. 17-29, also the poem 'Ode: Of Wit' by Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) in the same volume, p.223.

<sup>24</sup> See 'Vivien Duffield: The woman who thinks it's better to give', by Andrew Anthony, *The Observer*, 27 March 2011, Available online, <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2011/mar/27/observer-profile-vivien-duffield-philanthropy> (Last accessed, December 2016).

<sup>25</sup> See *The Denham Report, Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion*, published by the Home Office (2001). Drawing upon other reports, such as the review chaired by Sir Herman Ousey concerning race relations in Bradford, the Denham report speaks of 'fractured communities' and states that 'sporting and cultural opportunities can play an important part in re-engaging disaffected sections of the community, building shared social capital and grass roots leadership through improved cross-cultural interaction', p.28. Available online, <http://www.tedcandle.co.uk/publications/005%20Building%20Cohesive%20Communities%20%28The%20Denham%20Report%29%202001.pdf> (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>26</sup> See Department for Culture, Media & Sport and The Rt Hon Maria Miller, 14 January 2014, GOV.UK Media and Creative Industries <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/creative-industries-worth-8million-an-hour-to-uk-economy> (Last Accessed October 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Gordon Brown and Chris Smith are among the politicians who point to the Hartcliffe Dance Company. See Brown, G. (2007) p.212; and Smith, C. (1998), p.136. See also 'Boredom and Crime', This is Bristol, *Bristol Post* (21 April 2011) <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/boredom-crime/story-11283152-detail/story.html> (Last accessed December 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Eagleton (2014) and Yudice (2003) examine this phenomenon from Marxian and Foucauldian theoretical standpoints respectively.

<sup>29</sup> Although critical of uneven access the 2015 *Warwick Commission Report, Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth*, from the University of Warwick sticks to the political terms of this



development discourse. In the words of the report's introduction by Vikki Heywood; 'The key message from this report is that the government and the Cultural and Creative Industries need to take a united and coherent approach that guarantees equal access for everyone to a rich cultural education and the opportunity to live a creative life.' See p. 9. Available online at [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick\\_commission\\_report\\_2015.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_report_2015.pdf). (Last accessed December 2016). This call for unity and coherency frames a report which is an example of an employers' conversation that bypasses trade unions to the point where organised labour is entirely invisible in a report that claims to be the result of wide-ranged evidence gathering. In December 2016 students occupied Warwick University's brand new £5.3 million conference facility opposing the university's implementation of tuition fees and labour casualisation which they said were crucial issues 'not only for the right of workers but also for quality of education'. See <https://warwick4freededucation.wordpress.com/> (Last accessed December 2016).

<sup>30</sup> See Castells and Ince (2003), p.31.

<sup>31</sup> See Hudson (2003); (2005).

<sup>32</sup> Recognising the political scope of climate change the IPCC's two watchwords are resilience and transformation. Resilience refers to the capacity, mainly on the part of developed countries, to manage and adapt to climate change within the parameters of 'existing technological, governance, and value systems'. Transformation refers to the need for more radical responses to problems caused or exacerbated by climate change. According to the IPCC the pressures for fundamental systemic transformation are stronger in developing nations 'where vulnerability is high and adaptive capacity low; changes in climate extremes can make it difficult for systems to adapt sustainably without transformational changes.' See IPCC (2012), p.20. Also online at <http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/> (Last accessed October 2014).

<sup>33</sup> See Report by the American Society of Civil Engineers, Hurricane Katrina External Review Panel, *The New Orleans Hurricane Protection System: What Went Wrong and Why* <http://biotech.law.lsu.edu/katrina/reports/ERPreport.pdf> (Last accessed December 2016).

<sup>34</sup> See Bourdieu (1977), p.172 ff.

<sup>35</sup> In the midst of the most dramatic public sector cuts since the 1980s, a 2016 report commissioned by the Arts Council of England states that the majority of organisations it surveyed 'have seen their private incomes grow over the last two years, and most of them expect this area to continue growing over the next three years. The sector is particularly optimistic about growth in income from trusts and foundations and individuals (...)' See MTM (2016), p.19.

<sup>36</sup> Bourdieu also sees great artistic subtlety in compensatory culture. Gabriel Fauré's (1845-1924) *Madrigal* of 1884 was not originally intended as a harmonic diversion from the class conflict, manifested in the important French coalminers' strike in Anzin at the time, but, as Bourdieu suggests, for the *grande bourgeoisie* the music had that role. See Bourdieu (1993), p57.

<sup>37</sup> See Young's 'Enterprise Regained', in Heelas & Morris (1992), pp. 29-35.

<sup>38</sup> Anderson (1995), p. xviii.

<sup>39</sup> See 'After Virtue, Law', by F.H. Buckley, in Anderson (1995), p.15.

<sup>40</sup> Anderson writes, 'words that some had thought and others hoped to see the back of forever are creeping back into social analysis: fidelity, duty, fortitude, toleration, honesty, self-reliance, manliness. And even those not ready to stomach the full range of the moral vocabulary are alluding to

it collectively and indirectly when they talk of the need to promote community. See Anderson (1995), p. xv.

<sup>41</sup> See 'Trust: Lessons from the military in the Reconstruction of Civic Culture' by Christopher Dandeker, in Anderson (1995), p.129.

<sup>42</sup> Prime Minister David Cameron's political discourse of a 'big society' owed much to the strand of conservatism promoted earlier by Digby Anderson and the Social Affairs Unit. As Cameron stated in his speech to the Conservative Party conference in 2009; 'There will have to be cutbacks (...) and that will be painful. (...) And we will have to tear down Labour's big government bureaucracy, ripping up its time-wasting, money-draining, responsibility-sapping nonsense.' See, *The Telegraph* 8 October 2009. Online at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/6273107/David-Cameron-Conservative-Party-conference-speech-in-full.html> (Last accessed October 2014).

<sup>43</sup> Virtuous behaviour, so the argument goes, depends on shame and guilt; the common good and public spiritedness depends on a far sighted moral elite. Like the heroes of antiquity, people ought to endure pain to avoid shame. However, not everyone is to live up to the heights of virtue. Respectability ought to do for the mass. From this conservative perspective, respectability appears to have little to do with mutual respect. See Introduction and Summary in Anderson (1995), p. xv – xxx.

<sup>44</sup> As I come to in the next chapter, the sociologists Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), argue that cities are being conceptually abandoned as centres of shared political and economic values. The socio-economic cornerstone of a new type of city — the projective city — is the activity of diverse networks, and it is activity alone that counts when it comes to estimating the city's success.

<sup>45</sup> It was reported from Ravenhill's Edinburgh speech that he 'was against cuts but that the performing arts had been compromised by a "cosy" relationship with funders over the past 15 years'. See 'Mark Ravenhill: Austerity 'could be good for arts'', by Ian Youngs, 3 August 2013, online at <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-23557033> (Last accessed February 2015).

<sup>46</sup> Rousseau (2003), p.3.

<sup>47</sup> Adorno (2005), p.50.

<sup>48</sup> Bakhtin argues that language is not confined to speech and writing but should be seen as a spectrum of symbolic actions, as in the 'language' of carnival. See Bakhtin, M. (1984), p.122 ff. Like language, social agency is never completely our own, I argue it is connected to feelings for structures.

<sup>49</sup> See MacIntyre's 'Plain Persons and Moral Philosophy', in Knight (ed.) (1998), pp.142-152.

<sup>50</sup> At several points this thesis touches on the contest for the heart and soul of trade unions, and the need for social-movement-unionism. Generally speaking this position is also implied by writers such as Sholette (2011) and Bishop (2012). However it is a truism which often seems to justify a do-nothing approach, when it comes to the existing architecture of cultural decision making — as if in the face of war and the rise of far-right politics egalitarian politics can count on democratic socialism coming to the fore to meet the challenge.

<sup>51</sup> Toby Lowe at Helix Arts in Newcastle used this term to describe the discourse of Britain's Conservative Liberal Democrat coalition government. From author's interviews.

<sup>52</sup> Compared to the world of arts and letters it is much clearer how labour movements (from Norway's social-democracy or communist Poland to apartheid South Africa) have been a catalyst and a source

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of leverage for successful democratic struggles that go beyond the workplace and affect whole societies. The spirit of collective power and the sources of leverage in such movements are complex. See for example Whal (2011) for an analysis of social movement trade unionism in Norway.

<sup>53</sup> Scholars who have defended and advanced the concept of enlightened despotism as something more than a response to social forces regard it as a matter of ‘nervous interaction between ruler and government and the problems confronting them’. See Scott. H.M. (1990), p.15.

<sup>54</sup> In 1954 Eisenhower argued that support for artistic freedom distinguished the United States from totalitarian regimes. As is often pointed out this political rhetoric also served to turn the arts into an ideological tool for Western democracies. See Levine, C. (2007), p.97.

<sup>55</sup> Motton argues that this social nexus helped dissolve art in the values of propaganda, of the kind supported by the Greater London Council in the 1980s, and that left- wing artists were not sufficiently concerned with what was going on in ‘real working class communities’. See Motton (2009), p.71 ff.

<sup>56</sup> Paraphrasing Carl von Clausewitz’s (1780-1831) aphorism about war, Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) said ‘art is a continuation of politics by other means.’ Quoted in Golomstock (1990), p.256.

<sup>57</sup> See entry of Gastev on Wikipaedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksei\\_Gastev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksei_Gastev) (Last accessed, June 2013).

<sup>58</sup> In line with utilitarian thinking, the ends justified the means. In her cultural history, *Dreamworld And Catastrophe*, Susan Buck-Morss examines Soviet industrialisation policy as an example of the aestheticisation of politics and reminds us that it depended on the conceptual separation of mind from body. Although Gastev’s ideas were challenged by other communists, what he and others persuasively envisioned was a more or less spontaneous and psychologically harmonious mode of mass production. This was industry as a corporatist work of art performed in the name of socialism. In orthodox socialist thought, systems ought to fit human needs; but in Gastev’s ‘dreams’ the fundamental differences between human beings, machines and the structures of production were overcome. See Buck-Morss (2002), pp.105-107.

<sup>59</sup> An example of the difficulty here is found in the sociologist, Alan Swingewood’s effort to differentiate art and propaganda. Swingewood says; ‘Art that is propaganda, such as socialist realism, has assimilated ideology without dissolving it in its aesthetic structure.’ See Swingewood (1986), p. 91. Put more crudely this statement merely tells us that the function of aesthetics is to water down propaganda rather than to raise it, intellectually or stylistically. Perhaps the highpoint of a liberal philosophical tradition which only relates ‘art’ to things which — it is argued — are not art is to be found in the works of the Italian philosopher and politician Benedetto Croce (1866-1952). Croce defines art as ‘lyrical or pure intuition’ and he distinguishes this from all other forms of mental production. Croce argues: art is not philosophy; art is not history; art is not natural science; art is not play of fancy; art is not immediate feeling. Nor is art instruction or oratory, although he regards this as the form of practical action closest to art. However, according to Croce, art does not conform to the same moral calculations which regulate instruction or oratory. Having dispensed with all the fields of social practice that muddy ‘lyrical or pure intention’ Croce then goes on to describe art via its relations and implies a compensatory function which in fact runs against the purism of his own definition of art. The artist, he writes ‘must have a share in the world of thought and action which will enable him, (...) to live the whole drama of human life. (...) Many artistic inspirations are due, not to what the artist, as a man, is in practice, but to what he is not, feels that he ought to be, and admires and envies the qualities he lacks when he sees them in others. Many, perhaps the finest, pages of heroic and warlike poetry are by men who never had the nerve or the skill to handle a weapon. On the other hand, we are not maintaining that the possession of a moral personality is enough to make a poet or an artist.’ See *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry, ‘Benedetto Croce on aesthetics’,online <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Benedetto-Croce-on-aesthetics-1990551> (Last accessed May 2017).

Clive James offers a glowing appreciation of Croce's humanist idealism and suggests that his own mistake as a critic was to look for humanism in disparate activities when it is in the connections between them all. See James (2007), p.xix.

<sup>60</sup> The US curator and critic, Lucy Lippard draws a firm line between art and commerce. Lippard states; 'Art isn't entertainment. It should be free to everyone who is or might be interested'. See Lippard, (1984), p.22. Of course even if art is 'free', tax payers and/or patrons must pay for it to be produced. At a time when public arts projects look increasingly governmental in character, the art historian Claire Bishop (2012) carries forward aspects of Lippard's project and stresses the role of collaborative artists who disturb public discourse. Bishop argues that art should not be 'reduced to a question of propaganda'. See Bishop (2012) p.283. As with Croce the message from Lippard and Bishop seems to be that while art may have a relationship with entertainment and ideology it should not be confused with either. However, a central argument of this thesis (chapter three) is that it is a mistake to restrict the definition of art. Rather, it is important to look at what artistic values actually do in matters of entertainment or propaganda and so on.

<sup>61</sup> For example, the literary and political critic, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, sees poetry and politics as critically interconnected historical processes but places the first in 'the medium of speech' and the second in 'the medium of power.' Almost always the real purpose of this sort of distinction is to condemn art that is too obviously subservient to power. As Enzensberger writes, the 'political mission (of poetry) is to refuse any political mission.' [See Enzensberger (1982), pp. 31-33.] As laudable as this ideal sounds it leaves aside most of what is actually done in the name of art, namely all that is less militant, less independent and more prone to making accommodations with power. The role of the poet laureate is perhaps the most obvious instance.

<sup>62</sup> For example the first episode of the series *Civilisation: A Personal View by Kenneth Clark*, first broadcast on BBC2 in 1969, opens with the flowing statement from Clark: 'Ruskin said great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts, the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others. But of the three the only trustworthy one is the last. On the whole I think this is true.' See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6qYjisp51M> (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Structure(s) of feeling is a term used by Williams to suggest a common sense of perceptions that may be shared by particular generations of people but are yet properly articulated, or fully worked-out, and may have to be inferred by reading between the lines. The term also points to the gap between ideology of socio-political system and the actual experience of it, an issue of particular interest to the historian E.P Thompson, as I discuss in chapter five. See 'Structure of Feeling', Jenny-Bourne Taylor, in Payne (1997), p.517-518.

<sup>64</sup> Elias (2000), pp.482-483.

<sup>65</sup> The critic and television presenter, Clive James, offers a number of biographical narratives in support of his argument against the arts and letters as a pillar of democracy and civilisation. The fall of Vienna to the Nazis in 1938 is the big historical moment for James (2007) in *Cultural Amnesia, Necessary Memories from History and the Arts*. He sees Vienna as a merger of university and playground and overall he stresses how fragile really is the civilisation which seems to radiate out from such metropolises. Broadly speaking James's book implicitly accords with Elias's sociological sense of structured inter-dependencies which breed over-confidence. However, it is not Elias, but Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) who seems to be James's main influence in this respect because Croce inverts the conventional approach to the arts whereby they are expected to articulate and strengthen the most enlightened human attributes. Croce proposes that it would be more accurate to register the creative impulse among the lowest or most primal of human characteristics. See James (2007), pp.145-147.

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<sup>66</sup> Golomstock,(1990), p.259. See also *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, by Raymond Williams who argues that ‘the abstractions Art and Culture were a substitute for satisfactory social relations, both in art in itself and in general living.’ See Williams (1962) [1958], p.264.

<sup>67</sup> Arguably the recognition of this problem is one of the defining features of enlightened despotism. See Scott (1990).

<sup>68</sup> Jacques Mercier argues: ‘If a Fon or Yoruba god is shown as powerless, it is abandoned, and indeed is ceded to neighbouring and less respected populations. This relationship with the divine is the opposite of that in the West, where God is placed always higher and where the artist, following that example, claims to be demiurge. The problem today is to explore not new forms but new ways of being, and to make them ours.’ [See Mercier (1997), p. 117.] Mercier’s last point here, about form being taken over by ‘ways of being’, accords with a great deal of instrumental thought in the arts but it does not necessarily address the monotheistic culture Mercier critiques. Arguably the spiritual nexus is always a combination of faith (in an external power) and self-belief (in internal powers). This complexity is somewhat clearer the further one gets away from the slavishness of monotheistic thought. As Femi Felorunso, one of the interviewees in this study pointed out to me, among the large pantheon of Yoruba gods, only one, Ogun, god of iron, is regarded as faithful and can be depended on not to betray his followers. Reflecting the contingent relations with two hundred other gods, a Yoruba saying goes; ‘Deity, if you cannot improve my lot, let me be as I am!’ Such cross-cultural comparisons offer an important clue to secular Western beliefs about the arts, which, as Mercier suggests, have gained ground by virtue of their association with an altogether more rigid religious understanding whereby the one true God is *not* subject to human failings and our relation to God is supposed to preclude knavish behaviour on both sides.

<sup>69</sup> Eagleton (2014), p.179.

<sup>70</sup> According to Eagleton this was the real value of religion for Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) as much as for Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527). Ibid. p.140 ff.

<sup>71</sup> A workers’ photography movement was founded in Germany in 1927 under the general auspices of the Communist International (Comintern); among the off-shoots was the Photo League based in New York, and closed down in 1951 under the pressure of blacklisting during the McCarthy era. Comintern was dissolved by Stalin in 1943. Very few members of the League were actually communists, and from the outset the communists who instigated the workers’ photography movement in Germany recognised that seeing and showing things from a working class point of view was more important than party affiliation. As one League member, Lou Stettner, recalled in 1978: ‘People can only understand the Photo League when you take into context what was happening in America at the time historically and socially. (...) the American working people were on the move, politically and socially. They were fighting the Depression and there was a huge progressive movement (...) and the Photo League was part of that movement’. The movement Stettner refers to was the struggle over the meaning and direction of the New Deal. By 1935 this had taken on a distinctly pro-labour and anti-capitalist character that favoured market controls and progressive taxation. Within the political space opened up by this movement, members of the Photo League developed their organisation, their individual skills and, in many instances, appeared to flourish individually. By contrast, the works of professional photographers who self-consciously seek political and critical autonomy, may still be ‘framed’ by the need to sell stories in a mass market. See Owen Logan, ‘Where Pathos Rules: The Resource Curse in Visual Culture’, in McNeish and Logan (2012), pp. 98-130.

<sup>72</sup> The difference between turning classical music into an instrument of social inclusion and doing the same with Afro-Reggae music (Yúdice examines the latter) does not appear to be very great when different genres are geared to institutionalised (expedient) notions of political action. As Yúdice

points out, drawing on Bakhtin, cultural acts live on boundaries, and these boundaries are connected, if not underpinned, by violence. See Yúdice (2003), p.251.

<sup>73</sup> See 'the NGOization of culture' in Yúdice (2003), pp.154-159. Perhaps the lowest point of the cultural 'stereotyping', or politics of recognition, touched on by Yúdice was reached in cultural studies, when scholars joined in with simple notions of aesthetic-political affiliation. The hype has been punctured by studies such as *The Rebel Sell* by Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter (2006) and *Cool Capitalism* by Jim McGuigan (2009). The system's easy appropriation of rebellious aesthetics in music, and the arts generally, is obvious. At a deeper level, however, the questions about the contemporary 'spirit' of capitalism raised by Boltanski and Chiapello, mentioned above, require discussion, as I come to in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

<sup>74</sup> Yúdice (2003), p.158.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. pp.329-337.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p.362.

<sup>77</sup> If there is a fixation with participation in the arts, rather than the organisation of labour in them, this depoliticising trend is mirrored in trade unions in the discourse of *partnership* rather than apparently old-fashioned discourse of *organising*.

<sup>78</sup> In recent decades in Nigeria the argument was put forward on the left that the ruling classes — living in gated communities with private services — had effectively isolated themselves from the impact of strike action. A broad coalition of unions and 'pro-labour' NGOs was created to campaign more inventively. However, oil workers' leaders, responsible for political strikes under a military regime, did not support the analysis that the ruling classes were untouchable, and kept their distance from the new strategies. In their view if solidarity was taken more seriously, particularly by trade unionists in culture and education, strikes led by the energy sector could be extremely effective. See 'A Country Without a State? Governmentality, Knowledge and Labour in Nigeria' by Femi Folorunso, Philippa Hall and Owen Logan, in McNeish and Logan (eds.) (2012), pp.243-266.

<sup>79</sup> Mallock's argument in 1898 exploits the ongoing lack of public ownership in drug production. He compares an imaginary doctor who virtuously stays with the ill and the poor during an epidemic, who becomes infected and dies alongside his patients, with a more enterprising doctor who flees the epidemic and makes a fortune by inventing a cure at comfortable distance. See W.H. Mallock, op.cit. in Muller (1997), pp.217-218.

<sup>80</sup> See Eagleton (2014), p.63.

<sup>81</sup> The sense of 'dance' which Elias brings to the understanding of social figurations could be exemplified in a critical account of the surrealist movement's paradoxical relations with the official communist movement in Western Europe. See Vaneigem, R. (2001). One of the most important and detailed appraisals of the compromises and paradoxical motives which drove artists and writers to lend their talents to the official doctrines in Eastern Europe comes from Czesław Miłosz. See Miłosz (1980), pp.82-190.

<sup>82</sup> Op.cit. in Knight (ed.) (1998), pp.142-152.

## Appendix I: Biographical Narrative

### **David Harding: The Blessed Generation**

David Harding was born in 1937 in Leith in Edinburgh. Although he has been regarded as a father figure in Britain's community arts he is very sceptical about the description. There is no false modesty here. David points out that he never saw himself as a community artist. He sees the role as much more nebulous and powerless by comparison with his ten year post from 1968 to 1978 when he was employed as an artist for the new town of Glenrothes in Fife and was a member of the town's planning team. David's job description said that he was "to contribute to external development of the town" and that he was to retire the day before he became 65. He joined UCATT, the building workers union.

David feels life has been kind to him and history kind to his generation. He contrasts his experiences with those of his father who was born in 1896 and died in 1983. His father was a plumber in the shipyards in Leith and David recounts the turbulence of the first fifty years of his father's life; before he was sixteen he had been on two six month voyages on a whaling ship to South Georgia, at eighteen he was sent to fight in France in the First World War, on his return he served an apprenticeship only in time for the great depression and several years of unemployment. There were not many good years before the Second World War. Fortunately, working in the shipyards meant his father was exempt from further war service but by the end of the war he was forty nine years old. For his part David was exempted from doing National Service in the 1950s, he was training to become a teacher at the time. Jobs were plentiful throughout his career and he was able to pursue his ideas about public art in an epoch when it was felt that art could support a common culture and international understanding.

Recalling his youth and maturity David feels he benefited from his parents' Catholicism and the sense of extended family and community in Leith. He began to lose his faith when he was in his sixties and, when the scandal of the Church's apparent protection of paedophiles in the ranks of the clergy and its failure to address this crisis, he felt that he no longer had a place in the Church. David's father was also a trade unionist and both his parents did voluntary work of different sorts. He thinks a sense of service was instilled in him early on and it was reinforced in the Boy Scouts. He enjoyed his time in the Scouts enormously. Remembering

the Leith of his childhood in the 1940s and 50s David speaks of “great contentment” and goes on to explain that “we were all of one class, so we all operated at that level and there was no sense of breaking through any ceiling.” However, he also remembers how at the age of nine, he had already picked up a popular sardonic comment about white collar workers in the shipyards and made it his own when a relative asked him what he was going to do when he was grown up – David’s replied simply; “I’ll not be taking my jacket off”. Also David’s description of Miss Clark, his art teacher at Holy Cross School, may remind a listener of Murial Spark’s fictional Edinburgh schoolteacher, Miss Jean Brodie. Like Spark’s fictional character, Miss Clark marshalled a cultural aristocracy among pupils of relatively modest means. Among Miss Clark’s pupils were two other art world luminaries, Eduardo Paolozzi and Richard Demarco who David still remembers as a teenager loudly remonstrating to his teacher; “... but Miss Clark I *am* an artist!” Notwithstanding the sense of community contentment, which he recalls in egalitarian terms, David’s humorous recollections about his upbringing also suggest the opportunities for upward mobility that were increasingly available to working class people after 1945.

As a child David got a taste for drawing and painting from his uncle who was an amateur artist. Although he feels that it was inevitable that he would become an artist, he points out that his parents never discussed careers; their attitude was “just get on with whatever you can do.” After attending Edinburgh College of Art he started off as an art teacher for schools in Edinburgh and then went to the Hebrides. Herbert Read’s highly influential book *Education Through Art*, became a touchstone for David (in his words “a bible”) which helped guide his peripatetic career as a teacher and a public artist. Read’s book, which proposed aesthetic development as a means of educational reform was a manifesto for the all-round creative development of the child’s personality. Commenting on art as a variety of religion David says; “I certainly don’t think that art can ever replace what religion offered. It does of course offer the opportunity to think outside ourselves in the way that religion does.”

From 1963 to 1967 David ran the art department at a “bush” Teacher Training College in Nigeria and during this time he drew on Read’s book as a guide to teaching art without imposing Western artistic values on his students. This was a formative period for David and he came back to Britain vowing never to go back to the conventional teaching of art. However, the ongoing post-war reconstruction of Britain — which during the Cold War



increasingly involved a political balancing act between the warfare and welfare state — was broadly conducive to such reforming projects that broadened the role of art in society. On his return David wrote to a number of towns/local authorities asking for employment as an artist. Although his unsolicited requests to work with engineers and architects to make art for the built environment were unsuccessful his idea met with some interest and in 1968 when the new town of Glenrothes advertised a permanent post for an artist to join its planning section in the Department of Architecture and Planning. David applied and was able to show his seriousness and a rare enthusiasm for the role. He stresses how he also immersed himself in Glenrothes, living in a council house, joining UCATT, the building workers' trade union and living his life as a member of the local community, all with the intention of demystifying the role of the artist — “to emphasise the notion of the artist as artisan and as part of the workforce building the town.”

Alongside making art works for Glenrothes and giving people a sense of ownership of their environment David also took on graduating students to work under his supervision. Looking back on the frustrations that propelled his career and which led him into full time teaching posts about public art he talks about how unprepared art school graduates were for working in the public domain. The combined cultural mores of art schools and the art market appeared to form the proper parameters of art and therefore public art looked like a sideline to many. He remembers being asked more than once if he got enough time for his own work, as if public art was something of an inconvenience and obstacle to his work. Later on the desire to overcome this mentality led him to take up teaching posts first at Dartington in 1978 where he taught a course on Art and Social Contexts and then closer to home he founded the now renowned Environmental Art Department at Glasgow School of Art in 1985 from which he formally retired in 2001. From his time as Glenrothes' town artist when he came into contact and began to collaborate with the Artists Placement Group (APG) the principle David tried to convey to students is the idea that “the context is half the work”— as was spelt out by John Latham one of the founders of APG. As part of this approach David always advised his students that to achieve things in communities and local government an artist would be well-advised to “first identify your politician.” However, this practical approach to the social context of art is tinged with David's uncertainty about the politics *of* art. He has never quite made up his mind about how far to pursue this issue. He says that just sharing and democratising the experience of making art may be enough of a political act. He feels the

belief in participation in the making of art as a force for good is comparable to his long held belief in the good done by the Church. Yet while he criticises the governance of the arts, and the role of the arts in governing people as the structures of the welfare state are dismantled, it is evident that there is no crisis of faith for David comparable to his loss of faith in religion.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review: The Arts and Well-being

#### Introduction

One of the key ideas driving community arts in the 1970s was that people needed to transform art.<sup>1</sup> Today, the opposite seems to be the case. In 2011, following a 100% funding cut from the Arts Council of England, the co-founder of Mute magazine complained that to be a ‘winner’ in the competition for arts funding required compliance with a ‘near religious belief in the power of art to deliver personal transformation.’<sup>2</sup> This chapter examines the broad foundations for such a belief in advocacy discourses which connect participation in the arts to well-being. I go from the psychiatric interest in patients’ art works, which contributed to new concepts of art in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, to new ‘artistic’ conceptions of class and post-industrial society, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. On this journey from clinical to strategic socio-economic discourses I engage with three types of literature: psychology and psychotherapy; democratic capabilities; and the socio-economics of urban development and regeneration. If there is a quasi-religious belief in the transformative power of the arts this trajectory shows that it is certainly not confined to ‘personal transformation’. Discourses concerning the role of artistic activities in society are laden with a nexus of ideas about their benefits for psychological; political; and economic well-being. At least one, if not all three of these areas is the object of virtually all the forms of artistic instrumentalism one can imagine. Later chapters, especially the concluding chapter, examine the overlaps but this chapter untangles and reviews the three key areas where the arts are said to promote well-being.

In contemporary politics the concept of well-being is closely associated with the numerous works of the development economist Amartya Sen (1992; 1999; 2005; 2009) and the analytical frame of the Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme which Sen helped construct.<sup>3</sup> The discourses of well-being which entered the political vocabulary this way, attempt to re-proportion social thought by providing a people-centred alternative to widely criticised economic measurements of development, such as *per capita* Gross Domestic Product. Looked at from the perspective of global ethnography, Alberto Corsín Jiménez (2008) argues that well-being is a problematic ‘proxy for justice’ in so far as it allows ‘economists, political philosophers and policy makers to collapse sociological differences onto a rational template.’ In his volume on *Culture and Well-Being*, Corsín Jiménez suggests that each school of thought comes up with different ways of

measuring well-being, such as income, utility, standard of living, quality of life, human development, but as one would expect, he writes, ‘each unit yields different results of what counts as justice and where to look for it’.<sup>4</sup> From this perspective the focus on well-being also lends itself to technocratic ideas of social progress; i.e. reformist agendas that come at little or no particular cost to the existing economic order and the distribution of power in society.

Corsín Jiménez’s arguments also suggest that despite Sen’s critical standpoint in relation to utilitarian thought, the current emphasis on well-being gives way to a neo-utilitarian conflation of aims. Unsuitable or contradictory means may be justified by beneficial ends (e.g. overcoming poverty necessitates increasing global inequality, or aggressive wars must be waged in the struggle for peace). The arts are increasingly valued as a means to transform and improve the quality of life. However as this chapter argues their supposed utility entails accentuating their positive attributes, by effectively re-ordering the context of analysis, and by simply neglecting negative attributes. Therefore, in keeping with the analytical tradition of sociological poetics which highlights forms of compensation provided via the arts (as discussed in chapter one), the instrumental aims which define artistic discourses of social engagement need to be looked at more proportionally. It is also evident that the belief that the arts are transformative obscures the issue of where agency is — surely in people rather than the philosophically contested concept of ‘art’. When we refer to the arts we mean a set of creative cultural practices; however their designation under the category of ‘art’ is a value judgement which is often used to separate such activities from culture and offer an alternative to ordinary politics. In the words of one government survey: ‘art should be challenging. Culture is merely the way people are: their beliefs, interests.’<sup>5</sup>

Such distinctions are controversial. As Pierre Bourdieu (2000) [1984] points out in *Distinction*, they are part of a historical discourse which splits the public into antagonistic castes; ‘those who understand and those who do not’.<sup>6</sup> The sense of misplaced and questionable value judgements obstructing an open discussion of human agency and political policy become increasingly evident as we examine artistic advocacy discourses concerning psychological; political; and economic well-being. In each area problems of inequality (effecting employment and treatment; freedoms of expression; and the international terms of trade) are translated into the valorisation of artistic activity. My research suggests that the overlaps are given very little sustained consideration by artistic advocacy discourses. Yet the

history of psychotherapy and *subjective well-being* raises questions about what ought to be the main object of analysis — creative therapeutics or gendered labour and general institutional conditions? The difficulty of separating our state of mind from the state of the world we inhabit is connected to the political issue of democratic capacities, and touches on the idea of *well-being as freedom*; which we find in Sen's work. Some of the most historically significant claims about the contribution of the arts to the politics of emancipation come into view here; particularly the concept of 'the critical voice' that is very important to the general idea of democracy. But how, and to whom, do the arts distribute this important capability? In cultural regeneration discourses intended to promote *economic well-being*, there are echoes of classical utilitarian ideas which would suggest that artistic activities are a means to maximise the well-being of all. However, as we will see this is highly contested; not least from voices on the political left who see culture being used for the roll-back of the State, and to dignify social insecurity.

There are in fact great difficulties in disaggregating the impact of artistic activities from the systemic contexts (such as services and institutions; political systems; and economic policies) that are politically controversial. This creates great difficulties for any supposedly objective analysis of the public interest or common good; and to add to the problem advocacy discourses are remarkably unreflexive about social problems *in* the arts, so they cast very little light on combined social and political processes. Consequently, I argue that critically reflexive scholars of the arts such as Carey (2005), Jensen (2002) Belfiore and Bennett (2010), are right to eschew any straightforward advocacy for the arts as instruments of social action. However, this raises questions about the roots of the connection between the arts and well-being in aesthetic philosophy. This background will be discussed in the next chapter which establishes ground for historical and sociological analysis. To varying degrees the aforementioned authors all refer to Bourdieu's highly nuanced socio-economics of class and culture. However Bourdieu's analysis of the good-faith economy is overlooked, although it deserves particular attention given that the instrumental role of the arts is so difficult to demonstrate in terms of uncomplicated positive 'impacts'. While envisaging massive efficiencies in social spending to accrue from youth orchestras, one governmental study admits that in the absence of quantitative evidence of the desired outcomes, a 'high level of investment (...) is being made on the basis of "good faith".'<sup>7</sup> As this chapter suggests, the interaction between the arts and politics is anything but straightforward; ultimately it is the

influence of the good-faith economy that must be examined in relation to the objectives of artistic instrumentalism. Nevertheless, the three areas of debate concerning well-being to be considered in this chapter are core discourses; in other words none of them can be discounted without losing an important perspective on artistic instrumentalism and the main research questions of this study.

### **Creative Therapeutics and Subjective Well-being**

In the 1920s and 1930s discussions of art, psychiatry and psychoanalysis combined, and by the 1940s provided the basis for the new profession of the art therapist.<sup>8</sup> The origins of this development, which gave art a new institutional role are entirely European and rooted in the theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Jung (1875-1961) who believed symbolism was a key to the unconscious, and by extension to the social behaviour of individuals. In light of this growing body of work, the psychiatrists Walter Morgenthaler (1921) (1882-1965) and Hans Prinzhorn (1922) (1896-1933) both studied and encouraged art making as part of clinical treatment in Switzerland and Germany respectively. Morgenthaler, regarded artistic expression as ‘a defence mechanism rather than the expression of diseased mind,’ and Prinzhorn’s work inspired the concepts of ‘art brut’ and ‘outsider art’.<sup>9</sup> Prinzhorn’s writings and his collection of images were taken up by the founders of surrealism and so from the outset art was not simply an instrument of therapy, it also offered up new ideas about art. Unlike the chequered and somewhat brutal history of biological interventions in psychiatry such as lobotomy, psychotherapy relies on communicative processes. Creative practices are regarded as a bridge between the patient’s inner world and the therapist. In so far as one can look at psychotherapy and psychiatry separately, the arts are regarded as an important means of psychotherapy.<sup>10</sup> But how far creative therapies assist people to overcome mental distress is a difficult matter to assess.

In *The Arts and Human Development: A Psychological Case Study of the Artistic Process*, Howard Gardner (1973), a professor of development and cognition, argues that aesthetic activities provide patients with a more accessible means of expression than other communicative systems because artistic expression, such as dance, taps into sensibilities and communicative capacities that may be underdeveloped by education systems and adult behavioral norms. What is crucial, Gardner writes, ‘is the way in which the individual’s psychological health and well-being seems so closely correlated with his capacity to participate spontaneously and fully in the artistic process.’<sup>11</sup> However, as Gardner states the

usefulness of the arts in the therapeutic rehabilitation remains in doubt because of a lack of control experiments. He also acknowledges that there is at least as much evidence to suggest that patients are helped by more prosaic expressions of human sensitivity like ‘mawkish’ greetings cards as by ‘the formal elegance’ found the arts.<sup>12</sup>

Ten years later Gardener (1983) wrote *Frames of Mind, The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* and the conceptual approach here has gained in popularity. Here Gardener seems to implicitly disavow his earlier correlation between artistic participation and psychological well-being. Gardener’s theory of intelligences considers a wider range of distinct sensibilities and aptitudes than are evaluated by IQ testing, and his more differentiated approach is compatible with the views of psychotherapists who argue that people can pursue sophisticated art activities in the midst of serious anguish.<sup>13</sup> The point is that mental distress does not imply any loss of intelligence and although creative activities may provide temporary relief, they do not necessarily signify improved mental health. So creative therapies seem to benefit some people some of the time. As their advocates argue, artistic activity can help to preserve a person’s individuality. Andrea Gilroy (2006), author of *Art Therapy, Research and Evidence Based Practice*, states that ‘making art within a therapeutic relationship gives clients a unique sense of agency in the management of their psychological well-being’<sup>14</sup> Gilroy’s book attempts to balance the demand in the public sector for evidence of the effectiveness of treatments with a commitment to valuing art in its own right within institutional contexts.

It is worth comparing the advocacy of art therapy, to the wider project of the therapeutic communities’ movement. In Britain the origins of these anti-bureaucratic and avowedly non-hierarchical communities lie in experiments conducted by military psychiatrists during the Second World War when the climate of the time was towards democratisation. As with some of the more revolutionary manifestations of therapeutic communities (such as Kingsley Hall in London, founded by R.D. Laing and others in the mid-1960s), the group was regarded as more than a collection of patients; it was the instrument of psychotherapy. The problems that were encountered in this way prompted many reflexive accounts of psychotherapeutic success and failure (Barnes and Berke 2007; Campling and Haigh 1999; Hishelwood and Manning 1979; Hobson 1989). In Penelope Campling and Rex Haigh’s volume, *Therapeutic Communities, Past Present and Future*, Bridget Higgins and Chris Newrith’s discussion of creative therapies touch on the inter-subjective issues such as ‘the persecutory

spiral' (Meares and Hobson 1977) which therapists inflict on their clients, and unwittingly on themselves when they adopt an overly normative standpoint.

Russell Meares and Robert Hobson's 'The Persecutory Therapist' reflects on the failures of therapeutic relationships and the possible damage done by them. This sort of critical reflexivity does not appear to be encouraged by the shift towards evidence based health and social care. Although Gilroy's (2006) book on evidence based practice points to several studies of art therapy involving randomised control trials, what these trials show is not clear. The problems of measurement are also evident in Lynn Kapitan's (2010) *Introduction to Art Therapy Research* and in comparison to the writers associated with therapeutic communities both these authors appear very reluctant to consider the failures of therapeutic relationships.<sup>15</sup> Gilroy stresses that research in mental health is not a level playing field and there is a contest for research funding weighted towards problems that might be turned into business opportunities favouring the pharmaceutical industry.<sup>16</sup> She sees a need to generate 'a critical mass' of evidence to demonstrate 'what art therapists know to be true: that art therapy is an effective treatment.'<sup>17</sup> This certitude about art therapy is rather paradoxical. After all art therapy is an inter-subjective means of treatment which, as Gilroy acknowledges, is context dependent.

Whereas the necessary dosage and the effectiveness of a drug are measured by the peak and the trough of its biological impact, the assessment of creative therapeutics seems to be implicitly weighted towards the evaluation of peaks (e.g. the way art therapy lends itself to a productive reverie, or that art rooms are distinctive spaces). The wider issues concerning 'the general atmosphere' of institutions (WHO 1953) are played down, and in their place the unique-selling-points of art therapy are played up in the books advocating art therapy by Gilroy and Kapitan. Because monetary values are seen to dominate research and service provision, it is clear that these writers hold creative therapies in high regard as a domain where human values and personal interactions count more. Yet surely these interactions can be commodified in ways which reduce their effectiveness; and if they are commodified, what happens? Obviously creative therapies can be poorly conducted and might be used as a means of making toxic situations bearable. Therefore the good news of evidence based therapeutics can be gathered from very bad situations and it is virtually impossible to measure the unintended consequences of creative therapeutics in such contexts.<sup>18</sup> If helping



some people, some of the time, become a means of upholding bad policies and patching up poor institutions, then good-faith starts to look more like bad-faith.

Whether creative therapies enhance the quality of care generally, or are in fact more marginal and something to be invoked as a necessary concession or a safety valve, appears to be the main question for writers sensitive to organisational politics such as Stephen Wilson (1979).<sup>19</sup> Wilson reflects on the history of therapeutic communities. From this perspective certitude about the efficacy of creative therapeutics seems to be part of a retreat from issues of ‘the general atmosphere’ of institutions discussed in the 1950s and problems of the dysfunctional ‘total institution’ (Goffman 1961) discussed in the 60s and 70s. The main reason Wilson gives is that ‘attempts to “treat” the larger system’ looked like ‘normal political activity mystified by the rhetoric of medicine’.<sup>20</sup> According to Wilson, the therapeutic communities movement put an undue faith in increased communication as means to overcome dissensus.

Whether Wilson’s explanation of the retreat of institutional critique is an adequate one, such historical accounts provide an important insight on the highly gendered character of art therapy. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most art therapists and their clients were women.<sup>21</sup> This reflects the history of a broader gendered division of labour within health and welfare services.<sup>22</sup> From this perspective the artistic or creative aspects of therapy seem far less significant than the modes of communication and ‘forms of feeling’ stressed by writers such as Robert Hobson (1989). Given its very striking gender bias, art therapy seems to be a misnomer which fails to adequately describe what people are really doing in terms of theorised human interactions.<sup>23</sup> The discrepancy between what health care professionals say they do, and what they actually do, is the problem that Stefan Priebe and Mike Slade (2002) address in their volume *Evidence in Mental Health Care*. These authors point out that there is a general assumption that the efficacy of treatment is the crucial factor but in privately funded systems the services also aim — very importantly — to be pleasant.<sup>24</sup> To private patients the latter may be just as important as the treatment on offer. Again this connection points to the central significance of institutional regimes rather than the particular efficacy of creative therapeutics.

If pleasant conditions matter a great deal it is interesting to go to the other extreme. In his profoundly anti-elitist (2005) book, *What Good Are the Arts?*, John Carey author of *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, looks at art activities in prisons. Although he does not touch on

the history of therapeutic communities in this context — the study of which would support his view<sup>25</sup> — Carey draws the conclusion that whatever successes can be associated with the arts in prisons may not be attributable solely to art and that: ‘Simply to be treated as a human being, and to co-operate on friendly terms with cultured educated people, could be a transforming experience if they were taught first aid or fly-fishing rather than art’.<sup>26</sup> Carey suggests that the combination of self-respect and mutual-respect is the most important factor and we should not agonize too much about how this might be arrived at. Yet there is an irony here because Carey does agonize about literature. Notwithstanding the examples he gives of literary celebrity as a dangerously double-edged sword, Carey argues that the potential reflexivity and open reasoning of literature makes it the most important art form; ‘it does not make you a better person though it may help you criticize who you are’.<sup>27</sup>

Drawing on sociological, psychological and historical-philosophical studies which show the institutional dynamics and social subjectivity involved in something being called ‘art’, Carey argues that art discourse has reached a point of ‘absolute relativism’, i.e. that art is merely what people think is art.<sup>28</sup> Carey’s (2005) book maintains that the arts are means of distinction and consequently they are often valued more highly than people. The ecstatic and transcendent feelings associated with arts can also be produced by violence Carey argues, and there is very little reason to value these feelings given that social views of some great art lovers appear ‘indistinguishable from those of any saloon-bar fascist.’<sup>29</sup> Given Carey’s broad social critique of what he says are ‘baseless assumptions and pious hopes’ about the arts, his reservation of self-awareness and self-respect, the provision of which are a genuine social use value of the arts, looks somewhat contradictory.<sup>30</sup> People who write literature may agree with Carey that writing is a good way of self-critically working out what you think and believe. But surely this does not mean that everyone needs to write in order become more reasoned or self-aware. Carey’s defense of literature as a morally reflexive art-form however brings us to the issue of subjective well-being which entails consideration of the availability of ethical choices, as discussed by Sen. This problem will become more apparent in the next section in relation to the development of Sen’s concept of well-being as freedom.

The problems of judging the role of the arts in promoting the subjective well-being of individuals are magnified when it comes to measuring the happiness of populations in different countries; a considerable concern in recent in social science research. As Darrin McMahon, (2006) author of *Happiness, A History*, says ‘such a complex phenomenon as

subjective well-being is decidedly not monocausal. Sociologists and social scientists have had a field day trying to push one pet theory over the other, (...) and have reached no consensus. They probably never will.<sup>31</sup> For philosophers such as Wayne Sumner (1996) and Fred Feldman (2010), one of the central issues is the difficulty of drawing an analytical boundary between *states of mind* and *states of the world*.<sup>32</sup> The history of therapeutic communities can be regarded as one attempt to bridge this divide and change both, in so far as this movement sought emotional, institutional and systemic reforms. A very similar nexus of aims is implied by Sen's argument that it is 'ethically deeply mistaken' to incorporate people's survival strategies into a metrics of well-being.<sup>33</sup>

With such a criticism in mind, the interest in the subjective well-being of individuals, and increasingly of populations, may conceal a fascination with resilience more than it represents a genuine concern with happiness or welfare. For Sumner, who defends the classical utilitarian discourse of maximising happiness, this is the main reason to refute subjective theories of welfare. Feldman, instead takes up a position contra Sen and defends 'shallow happiness' arguing for a mental state theory of welfare which he calls Attitudinal Hedonistic Eudaimonism. Feldman's argument depends on showing that someone who is mentally incapacitated, and others with whom he would not want to swap places, may still be fairly happy. But it may be asked if the real purpose of this argument is to justify politically created inequalities. Nevertheless Feldman's relativism demonstrates that from the standpoint of philosophy, contemporary understandings of welfare, well-being, and happiness may all be quite different things.<sup>34</sup> So how politically significant is subjective well-being? In her book *Smile or Die: How Positive Thinking Fooled America and the World*, the US public intellectual, Barbara Ehrenreich (2010) critiques mandatory positive thinking that is promoted and practiced by a range of networks in US society. She argues this movement distorts the comprehension of a range of problems, and punishes critics who accurately predict negative consequences. Moreover, the very heavy use of anti-depressant drugs in the US makes it very difficult to disaggregate chemically induced happiness from actual subjective well-being. However as the title of her book suggests Ehrenreich thinks the lack realism about systemic problems is a global issue.

### **Democratic Capabilities and Well-being as Freedom**

Sen frequently points out that famine has never occurred in a functioning democracy.<sup>35</sup> The central message emerging from Sen's numerous works on development economics is that

well-being is nothing without the freedom to pursue it.<sup>36</sup> Surveying the evolution of his thought, the Marxist critic Andy Blunden, (2004) traces how Sen ‘moved from including freedom as instrumental to well-being, or regarding freedom as an essential ingredient of well-being, to conceiving of well-being *as* freedom. Freedom here means to lead a life that one has reason to value; including both positive freedom (real opportunities) and negative freedom (freedom from constraints and interference), actualised as *achievement*.’<sup>37</sup> The theoretical trajectory summarised here produced what is known as the capabilities approach, now a development paradigm focusing attention on people’s capacity to make certain life choices and articulate a ‘critical voice’ about their society.<sup>38</sup> In Blunden’s analysis the critical voice is one of Sen’s most important concerns. For example in Sen’s view, fasting or going on hunger strike is an opportunity much available to the well-nourished; simply being well-nourished is not a measure of freedom.<sup>39</sup> A significant example of the social complexity of the critical voice is when women demonstrate agency by overcoming the son-preference - the socio-economic bias shared by men and women to produce male children; a form of discrimination that does not disappear with affluence. Accordingly, social well-being needs to be judged on the basis of the existence of such critical ‘capabilities’ and how equally distributed they are in society.<sup>40</sup> It is this recognition of moral agency, of the people as actors, not patients, which distinguishes Sen’s thought from classical utilitarianism.

Sen’s sense of the critical voice meshes with the general belief in the arts as a sphere of criticality and especially with art-forms that contribute to public discourse. His work also reinforces a vast literature that highlights those factors in society, such as education, press freedom, freedom of association that foster, enhance and protect the critical voice. He offers a regulative ideal which would always ask how any particular policy extends the critical voice, but problematically for Blunden this ideal is comparable to one of the most contentious aspects of Marxist utopianism; the idea of the withering-away-of-the-State. Were the State wholly ‘successful in distributing critical voice, [it would be] historically redundant; the State would be one subject among others’.<sup>41</sup> The critical issue here is that States have never willingly abolished themselves and to some degree most States nurture certain types of critical voice and distribute them in society.<sup>42</sup> In Britain Cyril Connolly (1903-1974), the editor of the influential cultural journal *Horizon*, and his supporters, helped broker this sort of contract in the 1940s. Connolly’s January 1943 editorial comment articulates this fairly clearly, he argues that Britain must rescue European culture and to do so attitudes to art must be altered; ‘we must give art a place in our conception of the meaning of life and artists a

place in our conception of the meaning of the State which they have never known before. Never again must our artists be warped by opposition, stunted by neglect or etiolated by official conformity'.<sup>43</sup> With this thinking in circulation among the political classes, the stage was set for a supposedly autonomous art to serve in the glorification of the State. Freedom of expression in the arts still remains a mantra in governance statements, even if it is not always upheld by governance practices. So if the arts have a relationship with the sort of flourishing of freedom associated with Sen's theory of well-being, then the idea of freedom in the arts needs to be thought through.

The type of freedom which looks most applicable to the relationship between art and the State just described may be clarified by Quentin Skinner's (2002) Isaiah Berlin lecture, *A Third Concept of Liberty*.<sup>44</sup> Skinner, one of the founders of the Cambridge school of the history of political thought, distinguishes three notions of freedom. The first two, which have overly influenced modern political thought in Skinner's view, are a Hegelian one of self-mastery, and a liberal one which emphasises the absence of interference. For Skinner, both of these conceptions obscure an important pre-liberal concept of freedom as a heightened status, contrasted not with lack of interference but with dependency. He argues that this third conceptualisation of liberty gives a critical insight into liberal ideology, not least because one of the key problems for any (neo-Hegelian) notion of self-mastery is the reality of self-imposed servitude that comes with dependency. A similar view emerges in Terry Eagleton's (2014) argument about the ritualised quality of self-expression, discussed in chapter one. From this perspective, one may argue that the poetic licence which States grant to the arts is a form of contracted liberty. And this helps to explain why, for some of Connolly's adversaries on the left, the idea of being in any way bound to the State was no more appealing than being at the whim of the market.<sup>45</sup> Their political aim was for the State to create an economy and help bring about a society where the arts could flourish, not to make the flourishing of artists dependent on the State.

The ways in which States seek to ration or control the distribution of capabilities is one of the main reasons Sen has not sought to delineate capabilities too finely. He writes of his scepticism about 'fixing a cemented list of capabilities that is seen as being absolutely complete (nothing could be added to it) and totally fixed (it could not respond to public reasoning and to the formation of social values)'.<sup>46</sup> It is clear that within the capabilities paradigm there is a strong recognition of 'tragic choices' whereby one rights based capability

gets traded-off against another. Literacy and education, for example, have routinely been used as an instrument by colonial governments and religious groups to remould indigenous culture. In the context of British social policy the writings of socialist intellectuals such as Raymond Williams (1921-1988), [1962] Julian Symons (1912-1994) [1945; 1990] or E.P. Thompson (1924 -1993) [1960] suggest that the artistic transaction with the State came at the cost of cultural democracy (i.e. a greater correlation between cultural policy and the real political complexity of culture that seems poorly represented by party politics). The views of these writers suggest that opening up the use of the media and other cultural activities to a wider range of class interests would have assisted the working class movement and therefore created a stronger social democracy. The historian Alan Sinfield (1995) argues, that because cultural power and influence instead remained in the hands of the few, the space for this kind of democratic policy was ‘squeezed between art and commerce’ in Britain.<sup>47</sup>

From liberal perspectives the arts are seen less problematically to support democratic values. The American scholar of law and ethics, Martha Nussbaum has developed the capabilities approach in a way which exemplifies the absorption of the capabilities theory within a liberal paradigm. Nussbaum (2011) specifies ten central capabilities, three of which clearly connect to artistic activities: i.e. senses, imagination and thought; practical reason; and play.<sup>48</sup> In her book *Poetic Justice, The Literary Imagination and Public Life* Nussbaum (1995) concentrates on the reception of a humane viewpoint in literature, which she compares to Adam Smith’s (1723-1790) concept of the judicious spectator.<sup>49</sup> According to Nussbaum when literature articulates this standpoint it can counteract the rationalism in justice systems which explicitly demands jurors to filter out their emotions.<sup>50</sup> Nussbaum draws on the novels of Charles Dickens (1812-1870), and cites George Orwell (1903-1950) to show the connections between literature, public consciousness and citizenship. Inevitably, however, she is faced with difficulties of causality in her argument, resulting from the obvious interdependency of culture, politics and justice systems. In connecting the literary imagination to the sensitive standpoint of one Supreme Court judge (in *Hudson v. Palmer*) Nussbaum admits that the judge’s position would have been worthless, ‘without the text of the Constitution, a range of specific [legal] precedents and the [position] of the majority itself ...’.<sup>51</sup> Nussbaum’s caveat begs the question; does good literature help produce a greater public consciousness in judges, or do the politics of social justice help produce better literature and a better justice system? Although Nussbaum’s arguments hinge on making a distinction between culture and politics how these are to be separated is a central question missing from her book. Indeed in

attempting to realise Smith's ideal of the judicious spectator it may be objected that Nussbaum over-plays a benign liberal view of literary values.

Joli Jensen, a professor of communications, cannot be accused of narrowing the cultural spectrum. In her 2002 book *Is Art Good For Us? Beliefs about High Culture in American Life*, Jensen argues convincingly against an instrumental and medicinal view of the arts which regards high culture as a tonic and mass culture as toxic. Drawing on John Dewey's (1859-1952) *Art As Experience* (1934) as well as contemporary analysis which connects art and ritual (Carey, J.W. 1989; Dissanayake 1992) Jensen defends the arts and culture in broad terms as the arena of human experience and expression. What is at stake in Jensen's argument is captured in her conclusion:

*If we want to change the world, we need to do it directly. The arts aren't good for us; they are us – expressions of us. We can't look to the arts to transform us, or to make the world a better place. (...) [W]e need to dispense with instrumental logic and intervening variables, and find democratic ways to identify and engage in right action. It's up to us, not art.*<sup>52</sup>

'Critical thought', and the critical voice, are what really matter for Jensen, and as she argues, art is no guarantor of these anymore than popular culture is their nemesis. In contrast with Nussbaum's expectations of the humane imagination drawn from the literary canon, Jensen's argument has an unsentimental clarity, partly derived from the tradition of American pragmatism. However because the arts, cultural, and political practices cannot be easily distinguished, and politics bleeds into a variety of activities, Jensen's argument seems to come too late in the day. In the arts, the problem of making a distinction between culture and politics long predates the 1970s, but debates of that time over the *representation of politics* in artistic or documentary works, versus the *politics of representation* in them, show how difficult it is to untangle one sort of experience from another, as Jensen tries to do. The problem of culture and politics merging together does not seem reducible to the mechanistic sense of instrumentalism, which Jensen shows in Marxist discussions of the arts in the 1930s.<sup>53</sup> It is also bound to a much longer history of the socio-political formation of values which bridge art, aesthetics and leisure, forming the analytical terrain of cultural studies.

In *The Idea of Culture*, the literary scholar, Terry Eagleton (2000), takes cultural studies to task for 'fail[ing] to see not only that not all political issues are cultural, but that not all cultural differences are political.'<sup>54</sup> Eagleton argues that the field of cultural studies inherited

from the German tradition of *Kulturkritik* ‘a lack of interest in what lies, politically speaking, beyond culture: the state apparatus of violence and coercion.’<sup>55</sup>

In *Culture/Metaculture* Francis Mulhern (2000) also argues that German *Kulturkritik* tradition provided a repertoire of national cultural predispositions that formed a mirror image of the politics of the European Enlightenment and that there is a link between this German tradition and the brand of cultural studies that tends to heighten the political meaning of almost everything except politics.<sup>56</sup> Consequently Mulhern and Eagleton want to counter an intellectual malaise and put culture ‘back in its place’.<sup>57</sup>

These academic debates add meaning to Jensen’s appeal, but also show how difficult it is to locate politics proper and to agree on what constitutes the political field. This may be the result of political intellectualism or political economy or, more likely both. Meanwhile, British society is seen to be increasingly ‘liberal in manners and illiberal in politics’, as the historian Ben Wilson (2009) argues in his book *What Price Liberty? How freedom was won and is being lost*. Clearly, the concerns of development economics and Sen’s concept of well-being as freedom are not confined to ‘developing’ countries and the issue of the distribution of the critical voice is just as relevant to the countries of advanced capitalism. As Jensen points out, liberal democracy makes extraordinary demands on people’s tolerance of difference whether found in opposing political and ideological practices or in other cultural values and religious beliefs. As Jensen says, the arts have become the intervening variable because as transformative instruments they ‘appear to offer a way to make this most difficult aspect of democracy evaporate.’<sup>58</sup>

### **Economic Regeneration and Civic Well-being**

One of the targets of Jensen’s critique of instrumental reason is ‘urban boosterism.’ She gives the example of the Campaign to Triple California State Funding to the Arts. Typically this campaign promised a vast array of benefits stemming from the arts with appeal across the political spectrum, albeit following the neoliberal logic of trickle-down economics. Thus the arts are said to support economic growth, increase the value of homes, aid job preparedness, promote tourism, help the ill and the elderly, they are a cost effective way to deal with crime and social problems, they revive depressed areas, and may even be regarded as part of the United States national defence. Not all expressions of boosterism are quite as ambitious as this, but according to the Californian campaign mentioned by Jensen, the arts hinge on creativity and freedom so they also promote capitalism and democracy.<sup>59</sup>



This political rhetoric seems to epitomise the dynamics of what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2007) call ‘the projective city’ in their sociological study of post 1968 management and governance strategies, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. Boltanski and Chiapello examine the way critical artistic thought and ways of life influenced capitalist economic thought after 1968. The concept of ‘the projective city’ captures a particular logic associated with networking and ‘network society’ (Castells 1996). Networks and projects are mobilised by expectations of self-advancement in relation to the advancement of certain agreed common goods (such as the development of creativity and skills) and an equitable or just distribution of rewards from projects. According to Boltanski and Chiapello this ‘presents (...) itself as a series of constraints placed upon a network world that encourages people to forge links and extend its ramifications, while respecting only those maxims of justifiable action that are specific to projects.’<sup>60</sup> They do not give examples of actual projective cities; and what the concept seeks to distinguish is the relative importance of networking activities in the economic ambitions of urban life. There are various ideas or ‘logics’ in the discourses of urban life, some of which are shown to be in sharp decline.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly the logic of ‘the industrial city’ is much less prevalent in France where Boltanski and Chiapello’s research is focused.<sup>62</sup> More surprisingly ‘the inspirational city’ (i.e. cities as sites and sources of inspiration) appears to have disappeared from discourse. Perhaps this relates to a displacement of inspiration from places to individuals. In other words there may be more “inspiring” people who (among other things) are involved in ‘urban visioning’ and the reconfiguration of cities, than there are people who are actually inspired by urban spaces.

Boltanski and Chiapello’s central argument is that contemporary capitalism has incorporated ‘the artistic critique’ of the system. Therefore what prevails is a new cultural variant of capitalism which depends on a particular spirit (not reducible to the question of ideology).<sup>63</sup> There are ongoing debates over the empirical details of the new spirit thesis (e.g. Budgen 2000; McGuigan 2009; Raunig, Ray & Wuggenig 2011) and its wider claims. To what extent does the French experience apply to other countries? Is the portrayal of ‘the artistic critique of capitalism’ valid? These questions are pertinent to the present study and I will come back to them in the concluding chapter which debates the new spirit thesis. There is perhaps greater consensus on the new patterns of production which Boltanski and Chiapello see valorising flexibility and creativity for the sake of a new enterprise culture. In keeping with

human capital theory, what a person *does* and *knows* is no longer nearly as important as what a person *can* do and this impetus gives workers more autonomy but also robs them of security.<sup>64</sup> Boltanski and Chiapello argue that these developments stem from the need to find profitable correctives to the inbuilt tendency of capitalism to deskill a wide range of workers across blue and white collar jobs. A critical point that would be shared by many writers engaging with the new spirit thesis is that creativity and precarity are two sides of the same coin. Insecurity is the new freedom.<sup>65</sup> Therefore re-skilling may look like de-skilling. According to Josephine Berry Slater, and Anthony Isles', (2010) in *No Room to Move Radical Art and the Regenerate City*, participatory projects framed by the post-industrial regeneration policies effectively 'require artists to leave their specific disciplinary skills at the door' and to channel a more general sense of creativity following the bureaucratic agendas of the projective city.<sup>66</sup>

Among the texts that belong to the self-styled category of 'urban visioning', Ann Markusen *et al* (2006) *Crossover; How Artists Build Careers across Commercial, Nonprofit and Community Work* pays close attention to artists networks as a means of re-distribution. The conceptual frame of this study is made clearer in Markusen's (2008) advocacy of a human capital strategy where she argues that State investment in physical production is inefficient and unpopular and the focus on industry ought to be re-balanced by a focus developing skill sets and occupations. The role of government is to get this balance right. This human capital approach to civic well-being is in line with the utilitarian argument of Charles Tolbert *et al* (1998) that the 'melding of the social economy creates a greater good for a greater number of people that off sets gains in economic efficiency achieved by large corporations and businesses'; in this view the 'greatest local good is related to local capitalism'.<sup>67</sup> Regeneration discourses may be seen to strengthen the hand of financial globalisation in so far as cities are thrown into competition with one another for capital investments. Writers such as Markusen in the fold of urban visioning avoid debates about multilateralism, speculative capitalism and the underlying logic of international competition. Nonetheless, Markusen's (2007) edited volume *Reigning in the Competition for Capital* does examine the damage of the self-defeating competition between municipalities for inward investment. And here there is a degree of critical rigour not seen in some of the key works of urban regeneration such as Charles Landry's, (2000) *The Creative City* where politics (unnamed as such) tends to appear merely as an obstacle to partnership.<sup>68</sup> Markusen and Gadwa (2010) note that there are political problems in cultural planning, and argue for a broad

interdisciplinary research agenda in the hope that capital investment can be channelled effectively, avoiding the following all too common scenario:

*Decision makers often favour ephemeral tourists over their own residents as patrons, over-invest in large-scale arts facilities that may become expensive white elephants in the longer run, focus on particular districts (and the real estate interests that have a stake in them) rather than the mosaic of offerings that already exist (...). At its worst, cultural planning at the state and local level becomes captive of particular real estate interests, cultural industries, and cultural elites, and thus fruitful ground for consultants who promise great plans that often turn out to be window-dressing.*<sup>69</sup>

Markusen *et al* (2006) in *Crossover* argue that artists have a positive instrumental role as socio-economic re-distributors. Drawing on interviews with a range of artists in California, their main message is that artists ‘make larger shares of their arts income in the commercial sector than they devote time to it’ and they ‘spend larger shares of their time in community and not-for-profit arts [e.g. public museums] than they earn there’.<sup>70</sup> The way artists work across the three sectors is thought to be beneficial for their development and, as the report suggests, for civic well-being: ‘Artists are the regions’ core cultural workers, producing economic, social and cultural dividends across all three sectors, a contribution largely unrecognized in either arts impact studies or cultural industry analyses.’<sup>71</sup>

Unconsidered here is the way that capital investment is influenced by the competition over rates of return on profit. Indeed the negative scenario outlined by Markusen and Gadwa above is in keeping with the history of debt-financed urban development based on prospects of economic growth.<sup>72</sup> As Collins (2007) argues, not only does this influence speculative decisions made by city planners, but competition for increased rates of profit may well involve fabricating popular opinion, corrupting the political model of partnership and consultation.<sup>73</sup> *Crossover* exemplifies Boltanski and Chiapello’s points about the limitations of projective networks. The role Markusen *et al* envisage for artists — essentially as socio-economic bridge builders and redistributors — also reflects one of the key points of the new spirit thesis; the move away from the theorisation of exploitation to theories of exclusion. The former, political economy critique gives a different picture of the moral economy of the creative industries and increasingly this classical view is being re-established by social science writers such as Toby Miller *et al* (2008) in *Global Hollywood No 2* which posits the concept of an international division of *cultural* labour, ‘designed to cover a variety of workers within the cultural industries, whatever their part in the commodity chain’.<sup>74</sup> This

approach is very different from the idea that artists are the core workers of ‘culture’ as seen in *Crossover*. It is also at odds with Richard Florida’s (2005) *Cities and the Creative Class* which argues for the centrality of the creative economy. Florida’s vague conception of a class — which ranges from artists and librarians to teachers and lawyers — draws considerable criticism, but his overall thesis rests on the key statement that: ‘Knowledge and creativity have replaced natural resources and the efficiency of physical labour as the sources of wealth creation and economic growth’.<sup>75</sup> This denial of dependencies on labour and resources in other countries appears very problematic, as does the paradoxical argument that the creative economy — because it is focused on ‘talent’ — can overcome the exploitation of the environment whilst at the same time maintaining competitive advantage over less talent-attracting regions. In Florida’s schema, the regional ‘losers’ are seen not so much as environmental sinks for waste, or sources of (uncreative) labour or natural resources, as ‘externalities.’

At variance with urban visioning, and in line with a re-emphasis on exploitation, social scientists such as Angela McRobbie (2004; 2011), Mark Banks (2007), David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker (2011) elaborate on the poor working conditions, insecurity and feelings of isolation experienced by people working in the creative industries. Markusen *et al* instead see the creative industries model as a means of improving the artist’s lot at the same time as civic-well-being. In *Crossover* they maintain that if money were not a consideration, artists would move between sectors more freely and the main obstacle to this is poor pay and the lack of a living wage. While Markusen *et al* see unions and professional associations as partners with business in an entrepreneurial culture, the volume cited above by Raunig, Ray & Wuggenig (2011) — concerning Boltanski and Chiapello’s *The New Spirit* — points to new organisations and possible shifts in consciousness that could give reason to believe that anti-capitalist critique in the arts is not exhausted at a practical level. Nevertheless, in Marxian terms, much creative labour may be seen as subsumed labour.<sup>76</sup> Notwithstanding some signs of political life there is little evidence that sufficient numbers of artists want to join, or form unions, capable of combating the precarity touched on very lightly by Markusen *et al*.<sup>77</sup>

Markusen’s writings on economic strategy appear more critically rigorous than other artistic advocacy accounts in the fold of urban regeneration looked at here. Nonetheless her approach is typical of the post-industrial school of thought that merges commerce and culture in ways which obscure policy choices and neglect the development paths taken by advanced industrial

countries such as Germany. In his book *Cool Capitalism*, the cultural policy scholar Jim McGuigan's (2009) critiques recent discourses of capitalist development which are framed by vague notions of culture and creativity. In McGuigan's analysis capitalism has effectively incorporated cultural dissent; lending the system the sense of coolness. But McGuigan takes issue with the rosy picture of enterprise culture which the system presents in this way; including Florida's fuzzy conception of a creative class that amounts to 30 percent of the US workforce. It is in fact difficult to see anything in Florida's creative class but a liberal attempt to articulate a national interest in developing human capital (i.e. skills and qualifications) when manufacturing industries are leaving the US in search of more profitable production locations. The issue is made clearer by Markusen (2008), however if human capital is the important object then many underlying problems in education systems are sidelined rather than debated by writers such Florida and Markunsen. The move from radical debates about education to a discourse of creativity is reminiscent — however unintentionally — of the corporatist reasoning of the 1930s in countries such as Italy where struggle-of-the-categories took the place of the class struggle.<sup>78</sup>

A self-defeating struggle of categories emerges in official publications where, as McGuigan shows, creativity has been reduced to roughly the same function across the board. As an example of the way creativity is rolled out in the hope of harnessing as much intellectual property as possible, McGuigan points to *Staying Ahead* (Work Foundation 2007); a report commissioned by the UK's Department of Culture Media and Sport. According to this publication all 'creative industries' have ideas of expressive value at their core and these can be commercialised 'from the humblest pleasing song or appealing advert to the latest interpretation of Shakespeare or new design for a car'.<sup>79</sup> The report sees a paradigm shift towards a knowledge economy, based on the fact that the costs of satisfying basic needs (food, heating, clothes, and other manufactured goods) were reduced by comparison with services. Thus a new class of consumers versed in distinctive experiences of everything from sleeping to information technology, entertainment and leisure is thought to challenge existing routines, lifestyles, protocols and ways of doing things. *Staying Ahead* recognises that there are foundational weaknesses in an economy geared towards the production and consumption of knowledge and culture. But the title of the report would suggest, its authors do not stop to ponder the political sustainability of the terms of trade which lowered the prices of manufactured goods and foodstuffs.

In the book *Culture/Metaculture*, mentioned above, Mulhern's (2000) points out that today's 'missions and visions and values, seem a world away from the corporatist schemes of the 1930s but they are not.'<sup>80</sup> When culture, creativity and knowledge are thrown together with overarching entrepreneurial zeal, the conception does appear very similar to 'the nation organised as the human body, with each organ performing its individual function but working in harmony with the whole.'<sup>81</sup> In a fierce critique of Florida's notion of the creative class, the human geographer Jamie Peck points out that it is 'a curious form of class analysis, in which there are no meaningfully enduring class *divisions*.'<sup>82</sup> Writers in the fold of urban visioning considered here would no doubt refute any meaningful linkage between their aims and the fascist conception of a socio-political harmony in the 1930s. In line with Landry and Florida's writings, toleration and liberal civic well-being are Markusen's ultimate goal. The arts are regarded as a means to that end, 'the intervening variable' as Jensen says. However, by contrast with Sen's insistence that political freedoms and human rights have a constitutive as well as an instrumental importance, key texts on regeneration appear to belittle politics within the arts.<sup>83</sup> In an effort to create something akin to a post-industrial social movement anti-capitalist dissent appears to have a purely decorative role; it informs and enriches certain art works. Terms such as cultural ecology are used to describe the general analytical approach which attempts to pragmatically reconcile culture and capital. However in practice the use of the arts in urban regeneration is controversial; not everyone working in the arts subscribes to the modes of political participation and partnership being promoted and the visions of entrepreneur-centred development.<sup>84</sup> As Peck notices, perhaps the most questionable achievement on the part of the advocates of the creative economy is to have entirely removed large scale public enterprise from the policy scripts of regeneration.<sup>85</sup>

### **Conclusion: Art and Instrumentalism**

Joli Jensen's refutation of instrumentalism in the arts and her call for direct political engagement, as discussed earlier, is clear. Nevertheless, her aim is complicated by the value claims which underpin ideas and definitions of art, and the difficulty of defining the field of politics. Whether politics is understood as the sphere of public deliberation over power, or the actual contest over power, politics is multifaceted. The above examination of discourses promoting the contribution of the arts to well-being shows this clearly: the arts are not merely a vector for political beliefs and ideology that are external to the arts — art and politics speak to each other through complex ideas of well-being and, at an even deeper level, through notions of civic virtue. Thus, at the level of economic well-being Markusen *et al* (2006)

Markusen (2008) see artists at the heart of a creative economy; and as the agents of a virtuous redistribution of wealth. In this case creative-entrepreneurial activities are seen as a politically appropriate means of developing human capital but to a very large extent the approach circumvents two very important political issues in the US and elsewhere, education and the politics of industrial globalisation. Florida (2005) goes so far as to suggest that the creative economy has broken the dependency on exploitation. At the level of political well-being Nussbaum's (2011) argument that literature is a positive influence on courtroom decisions seems no less extravagant. Although she admits that there is a wider field of power to take into account, what propels her argument is a very partial view of literature which neglects its possible negative influences on justice. There are many types of literary imagination, not one as the title of Nussbaum's book implies. There are at least as many literary works which reinforce prejudice, and uphold a social pecking-order, as there are works which question social injustice. A similarly partial artistic advocacy discourse is evident in psychological well-being back at the start of this chapter. There is a general uncertainty about diagnosis of disorders and the effectiveness of treatments which affects the whole epistemology of mental health. The field of power in this context is no less complicated than that of the rest of society and the term 'art' therapy appears to be a misnomer which partly veils the gendering of mental health care. Gender may be much more significant than art in this context. Yet Gilroy (2006), and Kapitan's (2010) advocacy agendas for research on art therapy retreat from such structural issues that are more evident in critically reflexive discussions of psychotherapy. Thus the role of the 'art' in psychotherapeutic discourses forgoes a more politically far-reaching discussion of mental health provision.

In each of the advocacy discourses examined in this chapter there is a silence about issues that would actually enrich the understanding of the relevant forms of psychological, political, or economic well-being. It is not only that advocacy discourses make inflated claims, often based on questionable categories (e.g. art rather than gendered care, or class stripped of income and ownership), it is that they are poor representations of the political options. How do such reductive discourses relate to one another politically? What can be detected in each is certainly not an absence of politics, or a lack of direct engagement, but the re-proportioning of politics; scaled down to fit with rationales for the impact of artistic activities. Although artistic aims are presented as socially progressive, there is little or no sense of political agency within the prevailing structures of power. Indeed rather than countering monetary

values, artistic contributions to well-being may be evaluated as potential efficiencies in public finance, or as alternatives to more politically difficult reforms. Hence the need for proportionality highlighted at the outset of the chapter. However, truly grasping this problem is much more complicated than registering the existence of a rather abstract battle of ideas. Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett (2010) in their intellectual history, *The Social Impact of the Arts*, point out that artistic instrumentalism is as old as the hills. If we trace the roots of Western aesthetics back to the writings of Plato (c423-347 BC) and Aristotle (c384-322 BC) we don't find art as we know it today so much as discussions of Statecraft and ethics. The main conclusion of Belfiore and Bennett's long view is that the positive intellectual tradition which highlights the benefits of the arts, rooted in Aristotelian thought, was only gradually formed in response to the negative intellectual tradition, rooted in Plato's criticisms of the demos in the Athenian City State. Despite the contemporary drive to marry art and well-being, and to see only good in the arts, Belfiore and Bennett argue that the arts are still caught up in this battle initiated by Plato's critique of mimesis and the social role of artists.<sup>86</sup> An appreciation of certain insights derived from the Platonic tradition puts the emphasis on the desire to transform art, and in some ways subverts later aesthetic norms.<sup>87</sup> Indeed the origins of art therapy are actually closely related to that movement to transform art. But as we have seen at the outset of this chapter, there are now complaints about a near religious belief in the power of art to instead transform people.

It must be asked, therefore, how such ambitions gain credibility and even dwarf the political imagination about plausible progressive reforms; in the arts and in society more generally. Like the sophists' commerce in philosophy, artists, according to Plato, cared more for popularity than for truth.<sup>88</sup> Arnold Hauser (1892-1978), an outstanding Marxist historian of art, gives his own Platonic sounding critique in *The Sociology of Art*.

*If the artist seems to be concerned with the harmonious society, he is generally only thinking of a unanimous following; his ambition drives him to be different from others and to be unique and incomparable. His struggle for success is just as often determined by envy, jealousy, and resentment against rivals, critics and opponents as it is by the desire for sympathy, solidarity and understanding by all the others.*<sup>89</sup>

For Hauser (1982) 'art divides just as often as it unites, (...) it splits people, according to what works they are capable of appreciating, into different camps.'<sup>90</sup> As I pointed out a very similar perspective is developed in Bourdieu's sociology. Another angle on the same problem is



David Lewis-Williams (2010) evolutionary archaeological studies which add a prehistoric dimension to Bourdieu's study on cultural distinction. From these empirical perspectives art, and ideas about art, are among other things the means by which social groups and whole societies discriminate against one another, even to the point of wiping out the existence of *the other*. If the pen is believed to be mightier than the sword, surely the belief requires us to examine the arts as a double-edged sword. After all, as Hauser suggests, the arts are a series of discursive activities, out of which relationships and common interests emerge and these are considerably more complex than revealed by artistic advocacy discourses. Esther Salamon's biographical narrative in the appendix following this chapter suggests the way art's internal critique — namely the reflexivity of people working in the arts — is a source of considerable energy and skill for the State, private foundations and charities. In a strictly materialist sense Salamon's account may represent the actual currency of 'good-faith'. Her narrative points to an area of negotiation and political courtship. In the next chapter I explore these issues historically in the development of European aesthetic philosophy that paved the way for the creation of important cultural institutions and new forms of Statecraft.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Braden (1978), pp.174-181.

<sup>2</sup> See Pauline van Mourik Broekman, (1st April 2011) 'Mute's 100% cut by ACE - a personal consideration of Mute's defunding', <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/mutes-100-cut-ace-personal-consideration-mutes-defunding-co-founder-pauline-van-mourik-broekman> (Last accessed March 2012).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Programme, International Human Development Indicators, See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/> (Last accessed March 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Corsín Jiménez (2008), p.4.

<sup>5</sup> *Consultation on the Strategy for Culture & Arts 2016-2022*, Department for Communities, Northern Ireland, available online, <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/consultation-strategy-culture-arts-2016-2026-online-survey-response> (Last accessed, November 2016), p.3.

<sup>6</sup> Ortega y Gasset quoted in Bourdieu (2000) [1984] p.23. Bourdieu goes on to examine this split in the formal refinements and distancing affects of artistic expression which in certain instances contain a 'refusal to communicate concealed at the heart of the communication itself.' See p.26 ff.

<sup>7</sup> See GCPH (June 2015) p.38  
Available online at, [http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5424/Sistema\\_findings\\_report.pdf](http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5424/Sistema_findings_report.pdf)  
(Last accessed November 2015)

<sup>8</sup> Edwards (2004), p.19.

<sup>9</sup> Stitelmann (1988), p.32.

<sup>10</sup> Given clinical overlaps and institutional set ups it is not easy to make a clear distinction between psychiatry and psychotherapy, but psychotherapy does not itself prescribe the physical surgical, chemical and electronic interventions given by psychiatrists.

<sup>11</sup> Gardener (1973), p.345.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.345.

<sup>13</sup> See 'Art and Insanity', *South Bank Show*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QApMVg8-yWw&feature=related> (Last accessed March 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Gilroy (2006), pp.38-40.

<sup>15</sup> As an example of random control testing Kapitan provides a vignette on a study of art therapy among 111 women cancer patients, see Kapitan (2010), p.77. Kapitan says that the study showed fewer signs of distress and improved quality of life among the women in art therapy, as compared to the women left on a waiting-list. This finding would appear to confirm the rather obvious assumption that receiving some attention for a potentially life-threatening disease is better than receiving none and waiting anxiously for treatment. Yet even this common sense assumption is questionable. Barbara Ehrenreich (2010) writes about her experience as a cancer patient and argues that the focus on positive thinking, which she examines in a range of contexts, is a means of social control. In the context of cancer Ehrenreich, a former human-cell biologist, argues positive thinking is a rather cruel and unscientific distraction from many important issues effecting the research and treatment of cancer.

<sup>16</sup> Gilroy (2006), p.19.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.150.

<sup>18</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous informant for talking to me about his experience of being offered art therapy in a Scottish mental health institution where there was insufficient staff to control a ward which housed some aggressive patients. In this case (brought to my attention while writing this literature review) regular physical threats from another patient added to his distress; and to a general atmosphere of insecurity. In my informant's view, rather than improving an institution, the provision of art therapy was helping to maintain a poor institutional regime. As with the insights provided by the art therapist mentioned below (see note 21) these discussions give a critical perspective that appears to be lacking in literature advocating art therapy.

<sup>19</sup> See Wilson in Hinshelwood and Manning (1979).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p.102.

<sup>21</sup> See Case and Dalley (1998) p.VII.

<sup>22</sup> Historical work in this field shows that women's networks have developed in complex ways. While they may be less hierarchical, they are not necessarily less authoritarian. 'Social families' have been constructed on the basis of personal relationships, however these networks have reproduced gendered divisions of labour and double standards in British health and social welfare. See Digby and Stewart (1996) pp.16-25. The gendering of mental health care is also evident in Skultans (2007) study of communist and post-communist services in Eastern Europe.

<sup>23</sup> Indeed Bill Dart, one of Britain's few male art therapists, (see Case and Dalley 1998 op.cit) contacted in this study thinks that what he does has little or nothing to do with art. For him the repressed feelings which lead people to become artists are a negative factor in the therapeutic context. Dart says; 'If you want to see from the inside of the profession a little, the first thing to have to question is the concept of art.' From email correspondence. A study which also suggests that what is really at issue is the time and resources given to human communication is Skultans (2007), op.cit. Skultans examines the commercial introduction of drug therapies in a post-communist context. From these practical and academic perspectives it is possible to see that 'art therapy' may well be a misnomer which detracts from the economic and institutional politics responsible for policies which reduce the contact time and human resources devoted to patients.

<sup>24</sup> See Priebe and Slade (2002), pp.232-233.

<sup>25</sup> See 'The Barlinnie Special Unit: The Rise and Fall of a Therapeutic Experiment', by David J. Cooke in Cullen et al (1997) (eds.), pp.111 ff. Cooke's study of the Barlinnie Special Unit highlights the range of situational factors influencing the improvement of staff-prisoner relations which Cooke argues was central to the unit's success.

<sup>26</sup> Carey (2005), p.161.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.260.

<sup>28</sup> Here Carey is drawing mainly on Becker (1982), Bourdieu (1984), Kreitler and Kreitler (1972) and Danto (1997).

<sup>29</sup> Carey (2006) p.132. Carey writes here about John Paul Getty (1892-1976).

<sup>30</sup> Carey (2006) p.134 ff.

<sup>31</sup> McMahon (2006), p.469.

<sup>32</sup> Sumner (1996), p.82 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Sen quoted in Feldman (2010), p.171.

<sup>34</sup> Feldman (2010), p.180.

<sup>35</sup> See Sen (1999) p.152.

<sup>36</sup> Key texts are Sen (1992) (1999) (2005) (2009).

<sup>37</sup> See Blunden (2004), (Last accessed March 2012).

<sup>38</sup> Blunden defines the critical voice as 'the capacity of a person living "inside" a society to form views available from a position "outside" that society' Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Sen (1999), p.75.

<sup>40</sup> In Sen's terms 'realized functionings' are what a person is actually able to do while 'capabilities' are the opportunities a person has. Sen (1999), p.75 ff.

<sup>41</sup> See Blunden (2004).

<sup>42</sup> As Alexander and Rueschemeyer point out States act as a buffer between art and the market even if it is with the aim of developing a wider cultural market to attract tourism. See Alexander and Rueschemeyer (2005), p.202.

<sup>43</sup> Connolly (1943,) p.6

<sup>44</sup> Skinner (2002), pp.237-268.

<sup>45</sup> This seems particularly true of Julian Symons, an English socialist literary critic of the 1940s who became a crime writer in the post war period. See Symons (1945) (1990).

<sup>46</sup> Sen (2005), p.158.

<sup>47</sup> Sinfield (1995), p.194.

<sup>48</sup> See Nussbaum (2011), pp.32-34.

<sup>49</sup> See also Peter de Bolla's 'The Visibility of Visuality' pp. 63-82, in Brennan and Jay (1996). As de Bolla shows Adam Smith's idea that human behavior is regulated by our attempts to adopt the role of impartial spectators on society has been mobilized for a variety of ends. The concept of the critical voice discussed in this chapter seems to have less to do with these discourses of impartiality and more to do with those of reflexivity to be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>50</sup> Nussbaum (1995), p.55

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.117

<sup>52</sup> Jensen (2002), p.206.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp.83-89.

<sup>54</sup> Eagleton (2000), p. 43.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.43

<sup>56</sup> Mulhern (2000), pp.4-21.

<sup>57</sup> Eagleton (2000) p.131.

<sup>58</sup> Jensen (2002) p.201.

<sup>59</sup> See Jensen (2002), pp.145-147.

<sup>60</sup> Boltanski and Chiapello say that the projective city 'constrains the network subjecting it to a form of justice that nevertheless safeguards its content and puts a premium on the qualities of the network creator – something none of the established cities was able to do.' See Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) p.107.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.136.

<sup>62</sup> As Jim McGuigan (2009) points out the fact that Boltanski and Chiapello's research is focused on France is an obvious weakness. See McGuigan (2009), p.26.

<sup>63</sup> Aspects of this view of changing social and political relations are lightly dramatised in the 2010 comedy film *Potiche* (Trophy Wife) directed by François Ozon. The plotline shows the management of a French factory being taken over by the owner's long-suffering wife with the help of her artistic son. This all leads to a glittering political career for the former *haute bourgeois* housewife who effectively displaces the political left, (i.e. the social critique) to which she has a secret erotic connection.

<sup>64</sup> Boltanski and Chiapello (2007), p.465.

<sup>65</sup> See Peck (2005), p.759.

<sup>66</sup> See Berry Slater and Isles (2010), p.27 ff.

<sup>67</sup> Tolbert *et al.* (1998), pp.422-423.

<sup>68</sup> See for example Landry (2000), p.190.

<sup>69</sup> Markusen and Gadwa (2010), p.388.

<sup>70</sup> Markusen *et al* (2006), p.7.

<sup>71</sup> Markusen *et al* (2006), p.9.

<sup>72</sup> See Harvey (2008).

<sup>73</sup> See Collins (2007), a political economy study which charts the interpenetration of government, banking and business in Scotland.

<sup>74</sup> Miller *et al*, (2001) quoted in McGuigan (2009), p.151.

<sup>75</sup> Florida (2005), p.49.

<sup>76</sup> See Helms (2011).

<sup>77</sup> To be effective this would no doubt entail artists' recovering forms of organisation hardly seen since the 1930s, finding ways to augment the strike weapon, such as occupations, and reciprocal linkages with more powerful sections of the labour movement. Such a political project on the part of artists would also have to confront the trade union malaise associated with logic of partnership (with management). This servicing (rather than organising) model has been taken up by many trade unions. See Logan (2010).

<sup>78</sup> See Salvemini (1936).

<sup>79</sup> Work Foundation (2007), p.19.

<sup>80</sup> Mulhern (2000), p.181.

<sup>81</sup> This is the favorable description of corporatism offered by the British fascist Oswald Moseley. Quoted in Eccleshall *et al* (1994), p.208.

<sup>82</sup> Peck (2005), p.757.

<sup>83</sup> Sen (1999), p.17 ff.

<sup>84</sup> See Berry Slater and Isles (2010)

<sup>85</sup> Peck (2005), p.757.

<sup>86</sup> Belfiore and Bennett (2010), pp.192-195.

<sup>87</sup> See also Puchner (2010).

<sup>88</sup> See for example 'Sophistry and the Great Beast', Plato (2006 edn.) Book VI., pp. 204-206.

<sup>89</sup> Hauser (1982), p.313.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.312.

## Appendix II: Biographical Narrative

### **Esther Salamon: Social Flatness in Art**

Esther was born in 1951 in Israel. At the age of six she was taken to Detroit by her parents who were originally from central Europe. Her mother worked in Detroit as an auxiliary nurse and seamstress and her father was a baker. She also had an aunt in Detroit who was a cook. Her family nurtured in Esther a strong work ethic which reflected the necessities of their lives – she says that it didn't matter to them what you did in life so long as you did your best to develop a skill so that you could get work. Although she had some acting talent as a young girl the arts were seen as too insecure so she was not encouraged to follow her early interest. Her parents divorced not long after they arrived in the United States and she lived alone with her working mother until she remarried when Esther was nine years old. Her step-father was a Detroit born maintenance man who worked in hospitals and nursing homes and in general Esther recalls the working class milieu of her upbringing. She feels that the values and political beliefs she formed during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s - particularly her commitment to “flat” organisational structures and a non-hierarchical approach to life and work – are an echo of these formative years. Esther quipped, “I come from a long line of nobodies” and, in conversation about the people from modest origins that she became attached to in life, or who influenced her, she implies a possible unconscious affinity with them. She saw these people fighting against the odds that were stacked against them from birth.

Esther came of age and became politically active in the midst of civil rights campaigns, the women's movement and the anti-Vietnam war protests in the United States, movements which coloured the gradual development of her interest in egalitarian political ideas. In 1969 she went to Michigan State University where she studied social work, special education, and criminal justice while she supported herself with secretarial work and retail jobs. Three years later, swept up in the spirit of the times, she gave up her degree course and embarked on several years of travelling, turning her hand to variety of jobs first in the United States where, among other things, she worked in bars and became a painter and decorator, then in Israel where she went to work in a *moshav* and then on a *kibbutz*. Work in the laundry on the kibbutz was punctuated by the pleasures of harvesting and here she saw collectivist theory being put into practise, albeit eased by the exploitation of Arab labour on other kibbutzim which she recalls in stark terms. At this time she fell in love with a Swedish volunteer and

their romance eventually led her to Norrtälje, Sweden, where she worked in a small electronics factory which she remembers very positively as a workplace imbued with social-democratic ethics. Although her romance was not going so well, she had already made a life-decision not to leave difficult situations too quickly. So she decided to stay on in Sweden where she learnt Swedish and also worked as a language assistant.

In 1974 an old university friend visited and together they travelled to Bath, England to meet another former kibbutz volunteer. They arrived in time for Bath Arts Workshop's Alternative Arts Festival which impressed Esther enormously. This was her first real introduction to professional artists from across different art forms, street theatre, community-based arts festivals and other participatory work that purported to "develop people to their full creative potential," all of which greatly inspired her. Looking back Esther sees that many different strands of her life came together in Bath.

In 1975, having booked a flight back to the United States from Sweden via London, she decided to cancel her onward flight from London and returned to Bath instead where she found the Alternative Arts Festival in full swing again. She made new friends and was offered a room for rent in a communal house that included several people who worked for Bath Arts Workshop and Community Technology (a charity involved with recycling and other sustainability issues). It was in this alternatively minded home that Esther also met her future first husband Paul from Plymouth, a former builder's labourer who was working as a musician, actor and co-director of Bath Arts Workshop at that time. Paul's interest in the arts had been influenced by his love of Chicago blues and his friendship with one of England's archetypal Bohemians, the painter Robert Lenkiewicz (1941– 2002). Paul introduced Esther to the argument that art without a politics of emancipation was bad art.

Esther did a mixture of voluntary and paid work for Bath Arts Workshop and then found her first "proper job" at Warleigh School just outside Bath, a therapeutic residential community which received disturbed children from local authorities across the UK. Although employed as a child care worker, she initiated and was encouraged to run arts projects at the school. She found the work exhausting but also found it intellectually and emotionally rewarding and this encouraged her to complete her education in social work.



Esther was accepted onto a social work course at Newcastle Polytechnic. She took up the place after a spell in Detroit where she worked and saved to pay for her fees. She also married Paul during this period. The couple came back to the UK and settled in Newcastle where Esther got her certificate in 1980 and went on to become a community and youth worker for Gateshead Libraries and Arts Department with a remit ‘to make libraries more accessible and relevant to inner city communities.’ Her commitment to non-hierarchical structures, self-determination and self organisation, influenced at this time by discussions of anarcho-syndicalism, was put into practice in the formation of a young people’s music collective and other community-based projects which she pursued in Gateshead.

Esther joined the Sunderland-based charity Artists’ Agency (which changed its name to Helix Arts in 1999) as a Placement Officer in 1987 and she became Co-Director in 1990 alongside Lucy Milton, the organisation’s founder. The purpose of the organisation was to explore the role and function of art and artists in society. To this end they organised artists’ residencies which placed artists in various social contexts – community, health and criminal justice - with the intention of developing artist’s and participant’s creative and artistic sensibilities as well as broadening participation in the arts and an understanding of its contribution to society. Through this dialogical approach which she says changes participants and artists, Esther saw the impact people had on one another; practising artists and people who are deemed to be “voiceless” - the disempowered, misrepresented, stereotyped and marginalised. Her previous experiences and her interest in “flat” structures manifested themselves in the way she organised and managed projects and in her relations with host organisations, funders, artists and participants. She tried to bring people together in as non-hierarchical a structure as possible to develop mutual understanding and respect. A creative, supportive social space was developed and people strove to make decisions through consensus. However, while state funded community arts are public goods, supposed to be accountable to the public interest, the lines of accountability are anything but horizontal. Tellingly, Esther describes Artists’ Agency/Helix Arts as “brokers”. They negotiated to persuade funders (trusts, foundations, the private and public sectors) and host organisations (both of whom largely operated in vertical, hierarchical and bureaucratic structures), and other partners to lend material support to collaborations between artists and participants, and to trust the partnership and delivery process. In this way they brokered relationships between funders, host organisations, artists and participants. In this part of Esther’s story, where she recalls working with funders such as the Baring Foundation, *trust* and *risk-taking* become as important as the idea of flat

organisation. In order to instigate and successfully develop projects that sought to “change mindsets” about public issues such as AIDS or crime Esther’s role depended on developing the trust of the people with the power to agree to the project in the first place as well as gaining the trust of the participants and the artists.

Looking back, Esther believes that helping to develop opportunities for people to speak in their own way and on their own terms through the arts, addresses inequality at the level of creative expression. For Esther this work reflects the fundamental egalitarian ethos that has guided her life. She cites instances of art’s ability to function as “an absolute leveller”, insofar as everyone (professionals and amateurs, rich and poor) might have the same access to producing and consuming art. At its best, she feels art is a way to speak and ask questions, and, if heard and understood, it can contribute to the amelioration of social injustice. Drawing on a mixture of therapeutic and political discourses Esther believes that, essentially, art is about change – the personal, the political and the societal.

## Chapter 3

### The Arts and Statecraft in Good-Faith

*One can compel by force some poor wretch to utter a certain form of words, yet he will deny to it his inner consent; thus the persecutor has gained nothing. Would one not have to be demented to suppose that men said (...) we are raising you above us because we like being slaves, and so we are giving you the power to direct our thoughts as you like?*

Frederick the Great (1712-1786) 'Essay on the forms of government and duties of sovereigns' [1777]<sup>1</sup>

*[I]n true commerce, as in true preaching, or in true fighting, it is necessary to admit the idea of occasional voluntary loss — that sixpences have to be lost, as well as lives, under a sense of duty; that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit; and trade its heroisms, as well as war.*

John Ruskin (1819-1900) 'The Roots of Honour', *Unto This Last* [1862]<sup>2</sup>

*A new community is being built in Germany, and it is our most beautiful goal and aim. (...) Our social welfare system is so much more than charity. (...) Everyone must have the belief that there is always someone in a much worse situation than I am and this person I want to help as a comrade. If one should say, yes, but do I have to sacrifice a lot? That is the glory of giving. When you sacrifice for your community you can walk with your head held up high.*

Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) speech for *Winterhilfswerk des Deutschen Volkes* (Winter Relief of the German People) [1936]<sup>3</sup>

*It's not a democracy. It's not even a constitutional monarchy. It's about what Bill and Melinda [Gates] want. We depend on them learning, and it's not as if there are many points of influence for this.*

Greg Gonsalves, AIDS Activist / Global Health Justice Partnership (2012)<sup>4</sup>

### Introduction

The above quotations concern the politics of patronage to be examined in this chapter particularly as an expression of soft power. The last chapter examined advocacy of the arts as instruments of individual and social well-being; I argued that artistic activities are narrowly defined by advocacy discourses. It is worth noting that although the representation of extreme violence and explicit erotica proliferate in culture these perennial themes which touch on power and domination are avoided in the discussion of the arts as instruments of well-being. Thus the arts are given the appearance of sterile

instruments. This chapter corrects the image and shows its deeper political and historical significance in the emergence of aesthetics, first under aristocratic patronage in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, through to the “mega-philanthropy” and patrimonial tendencies of capitalism today. Esther Salamon’s [Appendix II] account of her egalitarian artistic agenda which led her to collaborate with the Baring Foundation in promoting AIDS awareness illustrates the issues of consent, honour, trust, and gift-giving which need to be historically contextualised. As part of this exploration I look more closely at Baring’s patronage stemming from financial capitalism, and compare it to patronage from the oil industry; an industrial sector that was no less decisive in shaping Britain’s political economy in recent decades.

The above quotation of Fredrick the Great of Prussia concerns the need, even on the part of hereditary rulers to gain public consent.<sup>5</sup> Alongside his military victories Frederick is noted for his artistic and literary interests; including the patronage of Voltaire (1694-1778). The social and military successes of his regime, later glorified in Nazi Germany, are widely regarded as a typically paradoxical example of what historians call ‘enlightened absolutism’.<sup>6</sup> Under these 18<sup>th</sup> century regimes the idea of a social contract hinges on the exchange of protection and public well-being for loyalty and obedience to the ruler. Although erratic, and contradictory, the reforms made during this period should not to be underestimated; they included policies of religious tolerance and the abolition of torture. Describing German freedom of expression under Frederick’s influence, the Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791) wrote in 1789 that: ‘princes and the men of letters now restrain each other; and if that is not the best state of affairs it is at least a thousand times more preferable than that which lasted for centuries’.<sup>7</sup>

Edward Andrew’s (2006) study of the period, *Patrons of Enlightenment*, argues persuasively that leading enlightenment thinkers were less concerned with democracy or equality than with protecting and advancing their own privileges.<sup>8</sup> Aristocratic patrons, for their part, were willing to support philosophising about freedom in literary and artistic activities in so far as it helped produce a public discourse compatible with the development of constitutional monarchies and commerce. Although Andrew’s study is presented as ‘a history of the present’, his conclusions are limited to the contemporary issues of freedom of thought.<sup>9</sup> However, from a materialist perspective the co-moderation of public discourse by absolute rulers and enlightenment thinkers appears

consistent with the development of modern labour. Frederick the Great's argument above comes from a post-war period; the Seven Years War (1755-1764) involved every European power and crossed continents. The drain on resources made it evident that aspects of serfdom were obstacles to socio-economic efficiency and the need for social change was recognised by sections of the aristocracy. Slaves and serfs lacking rights, and obliged to provide free labour to masters and lords, are less productive than workers, small holders, traders, and others with substantive private lives subject to taxation. Nor do serfs make very reliable soldiers.<sup>10</sup>

The aesthetic philosophy which influences modern ideas about the arts and well-being developed under the patronage of these reform minded aristocrats in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The discourses, both of artistic autonomy and of artistic instrumentalism, still bear the hallmarks of the period in terms of an attitude towards public rights and contractual obligations. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) whose philosophical works include *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* [1764]<sup>11</sup> summed up the attitude of Frederick (his own monarch), with Frederick's injunction: 'Argue as much as you like and about whatever you like, but obey'.<sup>12</sup> Kant's 1784 essay, *What is Enlightenment?*, argues that intellectual openness strengthened the monarch's authority.<sup>13</sup> Clearly in Kant's estimation this was no longer based only on a monopoly of legitimate violence. Rather what we may call soft and hard forms of power appeared mutually reinforcing.<sup>14</sup> For Kant, freedom of expression cannot be allowed to impinge on institutional and contractual duties which hinge on the 'private use' of reason.<sup>15</sup> However, in the wider public sphere, Kant argues, reason should not be so hindered by these (hard) contractual obligations; and by 'uniting the voices of many' reformist causes can be brought before the sovereign and justly enforced by him.

In Kant's view liberty is rightly limited by the contractual ethics of his time, however his argument also implies Thomas Hobbes's (1588-1679) notion of benign domination; namely the need for a Leviathan power which keeps the peace.<sup>16</sup> Indeed Kant's essay is a particularly interesting example of Hobbesian thought because the emancipation of public reason takes on the character of the Leviathan, and the Leviathan sovereign takes on the character of public reason.<sup>17</sup> One might expect parliaments to replace the sovereign in later discourses. But as this chapter discusses when it comes to the emancipation of minds the arts often take the sovereign role.<sup>18</sup>

This Kantian vision of emancipated reason demands critical consideration in contemporary terms. Today the high-level lobbying sponsored by business organisations are not the popular forms of leverage which Kant proposed. Nor are trade union actions since they concern private labour contracts which he places outside the properly public sphere of politics. Moreover although union disputes may gain support from the public, their fate is never simply a result of the numbers of voices that are ‘united’ in a particular cause. For capital and for labour, strategy and tactics are important in articulating power and/or influencing types of reform. Moreover all the quotations above touch on issues of self-belief and honour which are also vital political attributes. Yet in the era of the internet and crowdsourcing software, the Kantian realm of emancipated reason may be superficially appealing. Elections, protests, mass campaigns and uprisings which are electronically conveyed may give politics the appearance of a game that is won on the basis of overwhelming numbers and consensus building. Yet to a very great extent politics remain a more pluralised matter; as anti-Hobbesians argue, it involves diverse forms of power and often unpopular types of leverage.<sup>19</sup>

The previous chapter considered Joli Jensen’s (2002) point that democracy demands great tolerance for difference and conflicts of interest; she thinks that instrumental discourses of the arts make ‘this most difficult aspect of democracy evaporate’.<sup>20</sup> In what follows, I examine this issue — empirically and theoretically — as an instrument of Statecraft under the influence of Hobbesian thought. If there is a disproportionate faith in artistic instrumentalism as a sort of Leviathan force, it has become more evident because 20<sup>th</sup> century progressive goals hinging on State action have been scaled down. Since the fall of Soviet communism, most countries have pursued pro-market policies which concentrate wealth in private hands and promise returns on inherited wealth which, it is calculated, now outpace general growth. As with the artistic regeneration discourses discussed in the last chapter, mainstream political speech stresses that contemporary State action depends on creating an attractive environment for private investments; public enterprise is no longer a key concern of the State.

Economists such as Thomas Piketty and Paul Krugman suggest that the massive accumulation of capital within the top one percent of the wealth scale indicates the

patrimonial tendencies of contemporary capitalism, and a possible return to the socio-economic order of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>21</sup> One area where the disavowal of public enterprise remains controversial is the pharmaceutical industry, the profits of which are thought to have a parasitical relationship with State supported research and public health provision. Greg Gonsalves, quoted above, is a leading AIDS campaigner from South Africa based at Yale University. His remarks point to the undue dependency of AIDS sufferers on the horizons of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which dispenses profits from the Microsoft Corporation to a range of organisations including the World Health Organisation. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Bill Gates speaks out in defence of the profits of the pharmaceutical industry,<sup>22</sup> and indeed his philanthropic activities illustrate the aphorism of another major businessman-philanthropist that; ‘you have to give away the fruit, but not the trees’.<sup>23</sup>

Giving away more money than one is obliged to pay in tax (as Gates does) is a sign of the heroic generosity and the commercial far-sightedness advocated by John Ruskin, the ‘high Tory’ Victorian critic of art and society.<sup>24</sup> However Ruskin’s criticism of short-sighted business objectives, and his interest in social justice, is burdened by his ‘continual aim (...) to show the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of one man to all others’.<sup>25</sup> Thus benefactors and like-minded individuals appear as moral giants who dwarf the ethical troubles of politics and the bureaucracies created by States.<sup>26</sup> Still in keeping with Frederick the Great’s enlightened absolutism Ruskin favoured the rule of a benevolent despot. Although this attitude may have fallen out of intellectual fashion, the contemporary political and economic situation appears to demand no less faith in individual capacities and benevolence, if not despotism. In this general context artistic instrumentalism has acquired a power of its own although, of course, it depends entirely on the energy and ideas of people working in the arts. Thanks to criticality in the arts they cannot all be overtly dragooned into the construction of a national community referred to above by Adolf Hitler. Some may take this as proof of the correctness of Cyril Connolly’s (1903-1974) recommendation in 1943 (discussed in the previous chapter) that artists, and artistic freedom, should have a key role in creating a new sense of the State to save European culture from totalitarianism. Connolly’s standpoint contrasts sharply with Jensen’s criticism that the discourses of the arts now give a false impression of democracy. In many countries after 1945, the kind of settlement Connolly campaigned for was institutionalised, and

considerable public and private resources are invested in artistic organisations and activities.<sup>27</sup> These investments have not in any obvious sense been responsible for a widely perceived homogenisation of democratic politics which, presumably, concerns Jensen.<sup>28</sup> Yet as we have seen, contingent alliances do come about, and a degree of mutual respect, or trust is created between individuals with otherwise conflicting points of view. **[Appendix II]** This chapter examines the development of these *rapprochements* which are a characteristic the good-faith economy described by Pierre Bourdieu (1977).<sup>29</sup>

The admonishments at the outset of the chapter concerning the heroism of giving are strong indications of the sense of recognition and honour on which the good-faith economy rests. Ruskin and Hitler's statements demonstrate the classical sense of poetics; i.e. the combination of rhetoric and action held together by ideas of virtue.<sup>30</sup> This embodied, living poetics, which appears to subordinate personal interest to a greater good, is vital to all ideologies, and the sorts of behaviour they foster.<sup>31</sup> Therefore we may agree with Bourdieu that virtue is the currency of politics, although he risks confusing virtue with power itself.<sup>32</sup> The relevance of the good-faith economy to Statecraft is that it is an indeterminate area of negotiation between society and the State — between private and public capabilities or powers — which together influences ideas about virtue in general. Virtue invites respect and trust, and some virtues such as generosity, are particularly honoured. Yet tangible gifts are not automatically a sign of generosity, and some ethical constellations frown on visible giving, so even this virtue cannot be bought.<sup>33</sup> Virtues are nothing if not social, and virtuous behaviour is what is socially and institutionally recognised as such. From this perspective it becomes clearer why arts' advocacy discourses have the rhetorical effect of sanitising culture; and why to address the research questions of this thesis it is important to examine the development of aesthetics in the context of good-faith economics.

### **Courting the Leviathan**

Although Ruskin eschewed equality, his arguments about commerce and honour reached out to the workers movement. Hitler, as leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party, incorporated an almost identical rationale of giving into a fascist concept of social justice. Hitler was an inveterate tax-dodger — and became a corrupt one after being appointed Germany's Chancellor — but his remarks cannot be

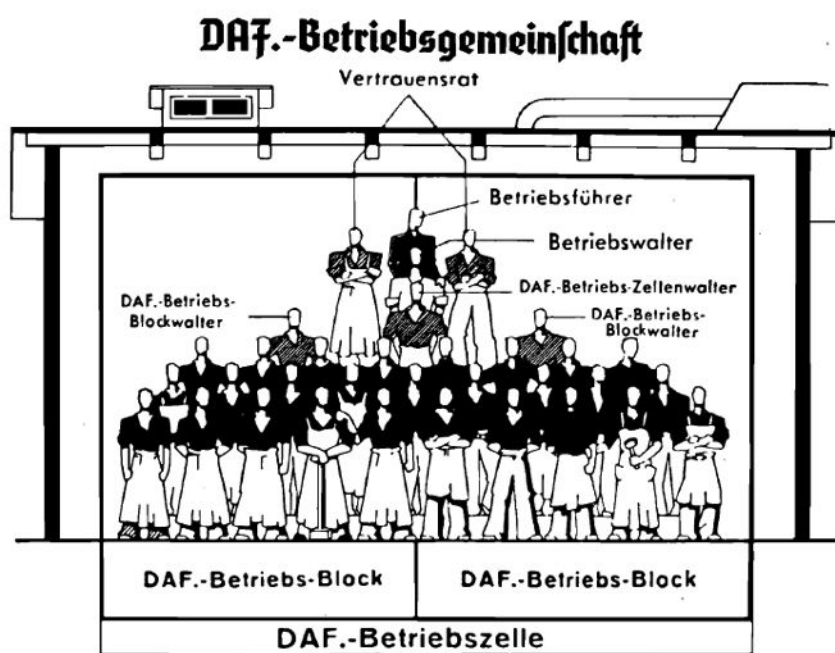


taken as mere rhetoric.<sup>34</sup> The eradication of the actual workers' movement and wage repression, were accompanied by Nazi welfare policies which appealed to civic duty and voluntary benevolence. This paradoxical combination of duty and voluntarism was backed up by the German courts.<sup>35</sup> Councils of Trust were also set up to replace solidarity between workers in banned trade unions.<sup>36</sup> Concurrently Nazi propaganda, which included the fine arts, portrayed the regime as the organic embodiment of the German working people. This depended on the interaction between various kinds of performance and types of representation compatible with the fascist glorification of war. [Fig. 3.1] Ultimately what matters to my argument in what follows, is the reinforcing and compensatory interaction between them; in other words the combination of hard and soft forms of power. [Figures 3.2 & 3.3] It is these underlying relationships that are the focus of analysis in sociological poetics.<sup>37</sup>

**Figure 3.1** Fortunato Depero, (1892-1960) 'War-party', 1925.  
National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome.



**Fig. 3.2** Graphic representation of a *Vertrauensrat*, a Trust Council, of the business community (*betriebsgemeinschaft*), these were set up in Nazi Germany to replace banned trade unions in 1934. Illustrator unknown. Source Wikimedia Commons.



**Fig. 3.3** *Arbeitsmädchen vom Felde heimkehrend* (Farm girls after work) 1940, painted by Leopold Schmutzler (1864-1940), purchased by Adolf Hitler. Hitler purchased art using a fund based on annual donations from industry, equalling 0.5% of all wages paid by German companies. Deutsches Historisches Museum.



Fascist poetics produced idyllic representations of labour which both compensated and reinforced an authoritarian rationalisation of production gearing up to war. It is calculated that Hitler spent up to 700 million reichsmarks on art purchases and elite gift-giving with business contributions to the Nazi national reconstruction project; these contributions represented 0.5% of the wages businesses paid annually.<sup>38</sup> Early on Nazi governance involved a major attack on trade unionists, and in general terms the political disorganisation of the working class found support across all classes and among various social groups, including artists and intellectuals.<sup>39</sup> However, in building a mythical and highly sanitized vision of society, the fascist State courted the public with abstracted images of working class strength and resilience. As in most communist States the iconography of labour compensated symbolically for the abolition of the very thing that distinguishes working class political agency — the strike.<sup>40</sup> The fundamental differences between such police States and liberal democracies should not blind us to the purpose of anti-working class collusions which implicate the arts today.<sup>41</sup> My hypothesis presented in the conclusion of this chapter is that alliances which disempower the working class, are not always so self-conscious, nor confined to totalitarianism. The transformation of countries brought under the sway of the Nazis, particularly the much debated level of public tolerance for genocide, has raised important questions about State and society ever since. My discussion of State, society and art shows that these three concepts are surprisingly difficult to separate. Therefore when we examine the relationship between art and politics, Statecraft ought to be among our primary concerns.

Certain concepts and ideas concerning arts and State formation must be clarified in this chapter. The first is that the formation of States is an uncertain and ongoing process. The disintegration, even of long established States, is always a possibility. The threat of disintegration may recede into the background of public consciousness but not all by itself. As with sport, the arts present some of the clearer examples of the role of cultural institutions in consecrating national consciousness. Cultural, political, and economic conflicts need to be contained by governments, usually with the help of elites, and using soft forms of power. No State that depends on hard power alone endures for very long.

Managing internal and external relations are the two inter-dependent fronts of Statecraft. Politically, both areas involve forms of conflict intended to contest the power or influence of others. They also demand forms of courtship intended to influence opinion and create consensus. With my research questions about instrumentalism in mind, it would be tempting to associate arts organisations and/or individuals in this study to one or other of the above motives; i.e. those that advance what they may regard as healthy social *conflict*, or those that use the arts to *court* opinion and ameliorate social antagonisms. However, this would be an unreliable way of identifying the differences between instrumentalism coming from above or below in the political order. In the context of a traditional Algerian peasant society — the setting of Bourdieu's study — the good-faith economy underpins a *modus vivendi* to which the majority are subscribed, but the terms of the whole internal debate fails minorities.<sup>42</sup> What becomes of them matters morally and politically; Algeria experienced mass emigration and minorities may actually amount to fairly large sections of society. Cultural regeneration is another context where the good-faith economy has an important role. In the case of Glasgow's regeneration policies the city's population was halved and in some areas the decline was even greater.<sup>43</sup>

'Art for art's sake' is a concept which developed in the historical period when industry and commerce were seen to be dominating the human spirit.<sup>44</sup> Thus the concept would appear to be a misnomer since the arts are always for the sake of people; or at least some people. Yet by distancing the arts from the structures of power, (e.g. governments, policies, institutions, and organisations) they may be rhetorically reintroduced to the social field in the form of a 'tonic' — to use Jensen's key metaphor.<sup>45</sup> In the last chapter I made the point that Jensen's rejection of artistic instrumentalism comes too late; hence the need to understand more about the phenomenon. The point deserves more consideration here. Jensen argues that the arts reflect us, and ultimately — for better or worse — they *are* us.<sup>46</sup> Art is not a tonic, nor is mass culture toxic. However her argument needs to be taken further; not least because a 2005 UNESCO convention, opposed only by the United States and Israel, provides legal instruments to protect culture from homogenising market forces.<sup>47</sup> So there are also geo-political issues to consider alongside Jensen's analytical equity.

The idea of creative play has taken a central place in artistic discourses since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As I go on to discuss, the aesthetic concept of play filled an important gap in gender relations in Europe. The arts and letters may represent the first area of modern life where women are taken seriously by men as intellectual equals, but if one recognises the dynamics of courtship, and self-promotion under the auspices of a Leviathan sense of power, this rarely meant that men, or women, took equality or labour very seriously. In 18th century aesthetics, alongside Kant's writings, there are other strong signs of the patron's interests and the political phenomenon of 'enlightened despotism'; these signs are also in the writings of Edmund Burke (1729-1797) and Frederick Schiller (1759-1805). As I discuss later on there is a lot more to these key writers on aesthetics than the influence or interests of their paymasters; this complexity requires a much needed analysis of the historical development of soft power via the arts. What will become evident is that people play with domination and submission (not in a theory) but in sexual and cultural behaviour that also happens to be a recurrent theme in erotic art and 'art-porn'.

As Jensen argues the arts are us. Sex is also inextricably part of the human condition and indeed attempts to play down the social complexity and political ambiguity of the arts can be seen more clearly in matters of sex, particularly in discussions which attempt to separate sex as a matter of human pleasure, from human reproduction, from economic life, and from matters of power. Even when producing children is not the aim, these four matters are all intertwined in human sexuality.<sup>48</sup> Arts practices are similarly interwoven and in parenthesis to the rest of this chapter it is worthwhile reflecting on the comparison between art and sex in the four areas just mentioned. Not only is there some difficulty in separating meanings of art and from meanings of sex, any attempt to do so, or to pass over the connections, could only mystify the way politics and the arts interact or 'speak' to one another today.

First, sex — like art — is expected to be an emotionally perceptive and holistic area of human pleasure. Nevertheless there is a visible explosion of formulaic physical spectacles and promiscuity on the internet, and much of it is 'home made'. Indeed the reification of sex along these lines is used to define precisely what is wrong with pornography. The most reasoned objections are not against the representation of sex so much as sex acts conducted or portrayed by apparently one-tracked minds.<sup>49</sup> Where the

arts are measured by a richness of ideas, pornography appears to be mostly about bodies performing sexual acts made, rather mechanically, to appeal to a predominantly male gaze.

Secondly, although there are some clear differences between much popular pornography and what is classed as erotic art or literature, these differences may only reflect a fractured consciousness concerning mind and body loosely associated with the development of monotheism. In any case the idea — expressed on both the political left and right — that sex as a formulaic physical spectacle is at odds with holistic human values is in fact very questionable. Archaeological sites such as the Khajuraho monuments in India provide evidence of the celebration of sex acts for their own sake, *and* for their part in the reproduction of a socio-spiritual order.<sup>50</sup> Of course some critics of pornography, especially feminists, look forward to a better social order than has previously existed. Nonetheless, our visualisation of sex, and of formulaic fantasies, appears to be a fundamental aspect of being part of human society.

Thirdly, the criticism of pornography as an emotionally and intellectually hollowed out spectacle meant that porn gained acceptance in some countries on the basis of artistic values, such as inventive narrative contexts or character development. Andy Warhol's (1928-1987) *Blue Movie*, realised in New York in 1969, showed these qualities but was swiftly censored.<sup>51</sup> However a few years later the same general values were successfully used to bring pornography into the mass market, thanks in part to the creativity of the US director Gerard Damiano (1928-2008). Although decried by porn's adversaries, films such as Damiano's *Deep Throat* (1972) or *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973) were deemed to be pornography for couples and succeeded in providing serious commercial competition for mainstream films.<sup>52</sup> The response from major Hollywood companies was twofold; they supported censorship of sexual content, whilst producing increasingly violent films also justified by general artistic values.<sup>53</sup>

Fourthly, remarkably partial judgements have reigned relatively unopposed in these matters; most of all in the censorship regimes of Western countries.<sup>54</sup> On the basis of artistic value, the explicit representation of sex was still discouraged in cinema, while the representation of extreme violence was mainstreamed. Although this trend was repeated elsewhere it was especially the case in the United States. The skills and special effects required to realistically simulate extreme acts of violence are among

Hollywood's greatest creative assets; and are surely a poetic asset for a State which frequently enforces liberal democracy by military means. The US feminist, and well known novelist on female sexuality Erica Jong points out: 'There is a disconnect between the freedom that *Deep Throat* promised and what actually transpired. Now we have total liberation of sexual things, but we also have the Patriot Act. We never made the connection between sexual speech and political speech.'<sup>55</sup>

However the causes of the fracture Jong alludes to are actually to be found in the limits of political speech, still related to Kant's separation of private contracts from the sphere of politics and public speech. The sex trade makes the lack of collective bargaining, and subservience to a regime of private contracts fairly obvious, but perhaps not obedience in public discourse. If an example is needed a salutary one is the career of the film star and author Linda Susan Boreman (1949-2002) better known as Linda Lovelace who starred in *Deep Throat*. There are three phases to Lovelace's career: first the original 'porn queen' and icon of sexual freedom and self-expression; then a feminist anti-pornography campaigner decrying callous exploitation she undoubtedly experienced in the industry; and finally, shortly before her death, a comeback to pornography when she accused her feminist supporters of also 'using' her.<sup>56</sup> Throughout all of this Lovelace never appeared to escape the need to sell a story. Therefore truth and fiction were blurred and sex workers' rights eclipsed by psychological arguments about her motives. In some ways this rather complex negation of sexual labour is consistent with Michel Foucault's view of the historical emergence of a discourse of "sex" which, he argues, 'makes it possible to evade what gives "power" its power; it enables one to conceive power only as law and taboo.'<sup>57</sup>

To summarise the above points, the dynamics I have described point to the interaction of hard and soft forms of power, and suggest their profound overlap. Norbert Elias's (2000) sense of dance-like social figurations in *The Civilizing Process*, discussed in chapter one, helps reveal what is at stake in official judgements of artistic value. The trope of 'sex and violence' is not so much a combination but a competitive figuration, and a trade in taboos, under the auspices of the Atlantic Alliance. Government ministers such as Chris Smith (also discussed in chapter one), are faced with an increasingly difficult task; they must find ways to distinguish the thought provoking from the obscene or offensive in culture. They may desire equity in delivering State support, but

the principles of equity also expressed by Jensen are of little help when faced with dance-like figurations of art and commerce which distinguish the civilisation of Western liberalism. With some justification it does not appear merely homogenising, or even toxic, it is actually armed and dangerous.

As the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) suggests, to understand the arts we need to think about the most primal human instincts rather than the highest aspirations they contain.<sup>58</sup> Such a return to basics must raise questions about the role of the arts in creating 'the spirit' of the socio-economic order; an issue which will be discussed more in later chapters. Ideology cannot be reduced to a set of illusions or distortions; it is also a set of ideas about how things ought to be.<sup>59</sup> A socio-economic order needs more than ideology can provide, it must create an enabling spirit if it is to have a future. Artistic values are used to demonstrate autonomy or freedom in culture, but of course this is no guarantee of the cultural autonomy of labour. Moreover it should be remembered that the symbol of the Leviathan, is rooted in fear. According to Hobbes peace will break down unless Plato's ship of State is guided by such a paternal despot whom Hobbes's hoped to influence or create through the lessons of his own text.<sup>60</sup> As a basic symbol of wisdom combined with arbitrary power, Hobbes's Leviathan has been conceptually recast many times according to a variety of political agendas.

Pro-market economists such as James Buchanan (1919-2013) and Geoffrey Brennan reconceived the Leviathan as the market.<sup>61</sup> In this school of thought the model citizen is an 'egoistic despot' who, by opposing taxes and freeing-up markets is a more reliable guide to the common good than politics.<sup>62</sup> Armed with the Leviathan image of the market, politicians courted voters by flattering avarice. Margaret Thatcher's (1925-2013) rhetoric epitomised this belief in markets, but she also warned free marketeers, in explicitly Hobbesian terms, 'that without the Biblical virtues markets could easily descend into an economic war of all against all'.<sup>63</sup> Looking left, there have been numerous influential thinkers such as Jacques Rancière, who want to unite and populate the working class with the multitude and who, in place of religious teachings, draw on a mixture of Marx and European aesthetics.<sup>64</sup> However, it is unavoidable that strikes sometimes divide the working class as a whole; and the massification of the working class does not make strikes easier to win.<sup>65</sup> Facing these issues orthodox Marxist



thought often finds trade unionism to be too defensive, too corruptible, and therefore dependent on the analysis and philosophical leadership offered by parties.<sup>66</sup> Yet a Leviathan version of working class power — poised to unite society and save it from barbarism — simplifies critical issues about structure and agency (discussed in the next chapter). Another transposition of the Leviathan is the subservience of the world economy to US federal debt; in this version, high-risk fiscal despotism represented by the status of the US Dollar as world's reserve currency, has quite literally *lent* the United States the role of global Leviathan. A web of financial interdependency, which is no longer voluntary, ties nations to the fortunes of the US economy.<sup>67</sup>

The important point to take from these three brief examples — from all powerful consumers to all powerful workers or dollars — is that conceptually at least there is a widespread and often rather exaggerated sense of Leviathan-like powers. Hobbes's original appeal to a Leviathan reflects a pre-enlightenment discourse of power whereby art and Statecraft are interchangeable concepts.<sup>68</sup> Art and politics continue to speak to each other on matters of power at a much deeper level than is apparent in overtly political art. An influential aspect of Warhol's 1969 *Blue Movie*, which is evident today in productions such as Maria Beatty's BDSM (bondage, domination and sadomasochism) films, is that these films play on genres, so that pornography becomes art, or art becomes pornography.<sup>69</sup> What is touched on at this level is the common ground of masturbatory erotica and aesthetic philosophy; namely fantasies about domination and submission.<sup>70</sup> Before examining this further, it is worth pointing out that when it comes to actual sex what is said to arouse appetites within BDSM subculture is not so much pain — given or received — but the subtle handling of power. This revolves around the sophisticated role-playing of 'the top' position (power and domination) or 'the bottom' (subjugation and humiliation). As a subculture this is organised and highly cooperative. Evidently, what moves it, are the desires of individuals to play with power over one another.<sup>71</sup> What all this confirms is that the Leviathan does not symbolise an imposed order; but a projection of the gratifications associated with submission. As Hobbes states; 'Desire of knowledge, and arts of peace, enclineth men to obey a common power: For such desire, containeth a desire of leasure; and consequently protection from some other power than their own.'<sup>72</sup>

As I go on to discuss now, the patronage of Europe's early modern aestheticians afforded the arts a dynamic role in creating this sense of submission because aesthetic philosophy in this period advanced the romantic aspects of domination. In Dante Alighieri's (1265-1321) *La Vita Nuova*, the words, 'I am your master / See your heart', express the sense of sacred love which is the topic of the whole verse. In *Europe in Love, Love in Europe*, the historian Luisa Passerini (1999) argues that this tradition of courtship or 'courtly love' was used to define, and essentialise European culture well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She points out that Europe does not have a discursive monopoly on courtly love; however what can be seen in Western artworks and entertainment genres is that feelings of passionate submission acquire the character of sacraments derived from a sense of personal destiny. In its idealised form, this love is unconstrained by class, education, gender, race, religion etc.<sup>73</sup> Of course real sexual relationships tend to be troubled by these very differences but in European aesthetics we can find the Hobbesian desire for a Leviathan power which incorporates and transcends them; and thus opens up the possibility of unhindered relations and a new sort of society.<sup>74</sup>

### **The veil of culture**

The Anglo Irishman Edmund Burke was the most prominent 'Old Whig' of his day and is widely regarded as one of the philosophical founders of modern conservatism. Burke, the son of a successful solicitor, is often regarded as an intellectual hireling.<sup>75</sup> He was supported financially by New York merchants and then by the reform minded aristocracy in England, particularly the Marquess of Rockingham (1730-1782). However, as Andrew (2006) points out such patrons 'desire service without the appearance of servility.'<sup>76</sup> Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, (*Inquiry* hereafter), first published in 1757, is understood to have influenced Kant's treatise on the same subject which appeared seven years later.<sup>77</sup> Burke's idea of the sublime contributes to the modern discourse of aesthetics which concerns things that are supposedly distinct from normal pleasurable sensations (culinary or sexual).<sup>78</sup> The sublime also helps explain Burke's Hobbesian outlook which combines independence of mind with his devotion to patrons under the ultimate protection of a monarchy. This is the common thread running between Burke's 1757 *Inquiry*, and his influential 1790 pamphlet *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (*Reflections* hereafter).

According to Burke's *Inquiry*, beauty stems from pleasurable sensations. However, what he calls the sublime is a more complex mixture of pleasure and terror. The ambiguity is derived from approaching the limits of normal experience and the proximity of absolutes which induce a state of awe and invite submission; e.g. God; vastness; death etc.<sup>79</sup> In Burke's words: 'Besides those things which *directly* suggest the idea of danger (...) I know of nothing sublime, which is not some modification of power.'<sup>80</sup> Terry Eagleton, goes so far as to compare 'the sublime terrors of authority' conveyed by Burke to cross-dressing.<sup>81</sup> Eagleton stretches the point given that Burke's outlook is supremely patriarchal. In *Reflections*, critiquing the French revolution, he writes that a man 'should approach (...) the faults of the State as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude.'<sup>82</sup>

There is, however, a strong sense of courtship to be found in Burke's writings; and above all what he argues for in *Reflections* is a spirit of virtuous partnership. For Burke, '[s]ociety is a contract',<sup>83</sup> and the State is consecrated by the partnership between different social groups; a partnership in 'all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection'.<sup>84</sup> This very idealistic description fits the types of patronage that were developing at the time which benefited Burke himself.<sup>85</sup> He suggests that a 'politically well-wrought veil' of alliances is preferable to the harsh light of enlightenment reason, (which he thought too abstract), and to the radicalism of the French Revolution (which he regarded as an intrigue to dispossess the Catholic Church). For Burke, the virtue of England's Glorious Revolution of 1688 was its underlying conformity with the past, which meant that the 'whole fabric' of monarchy was not overly damaged.<sup>86</sup>

*Reflections* is a landmark argument for conservative prudence, especially because Burke anticipates the problems the revolution in France would shortly run into.<sup>87</sup> However, as Raymond Williams points out, the idea of 'organic society' which Burke conveys came just as the common land in England was being enclosed, and peasants were driven into factories.<sup>88</sup> So how does Burke avoid addressing the grievances under Britain's Hanoverian monarchy? Burke explains that the benefits of the spirit of partnership 'cannot be obtained in many generations, [so] it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are dead, and those who are to be born'. Here he turns the social contract into a timeless and recognisably sublime

affair; ‘the great primeval contract of eternal society’.<sup>89</sup> Although Burke’s ‘veil’ is a fantasy about a patrimonial order transcending the grievances of its own making, Burke’s arguments do reflect the sort of private bequests to the State which had already resulted in the foundation of the British Museum in 1753.<sup>90</sup> In this sense Burke sets the stage for culture to become an area of virtuous negotiation between State and society. The founders of the working class movement did not have the means to court the State in this way, and their political efforts regularly amounted to treason.<sup>91</sup>

Notwithstanding Burke’s political influence, an even more important gesture in the discourse of virtuous partnership comes from Friedrich Schiller in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, first published in 1795.<sup>92</sup> Schiller, one of Germany’s most influential poets and dramatists, wrote this treatise for his Danish patron, Friedrich Christian II (1765-1814), Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg. However, the more pronounced influence on Schiller’s ideas about socio-aesthetic development is the Reign of Terror in France. Written in the shadow of these events, the letters prefigure the significance of aesthetics as a whole realm of compensation for political shortcomings; in this case the excesses of the French revolution. With a mixture of condescension and formal sophistication Schiller remarked of the revolution that ‘a great moment has found a little people.’<sup>93</sup>

Reginald Snell, one of Schiller’s English translators, makes the point that art is to Schiller what religion is to Kant.<sup>94</sup> It is not that the aesthetic realm is of value in itself, rather, ‘man must pass through the aesthetic condition, from the merely physical, in order to reach the rational or the moral’.<sup>95</sup> Thus the good and just society will be founded first of all on aesthetic virtue. Here again we find purpose embedded in art’s apparent lack of purpose, although for Eagleton (1990) it ‘is a world of pure hypothesis, a perpetual “as if”, in which we experience our powers and capacities as pure formal possibilities, drained of all particularity’ (...).<sup>96</sup> For Eagleton, ‘Schiller’s aesthetic thought provides some of the vital constituents of a new theory of bourgeois hegemony; but [pre-empting Marx] it also protests (...) against the spiritual devastation which that emergent social order is wreaking (...)’.<sup>97</sup>

In this respect it is vital to understand Schiller’s concept of ‘play’; which is how he theoretically constitutes the autonomy of the individual. For Schiller play is the means by which society can move to a natural order. The concept is especially important

because he sees pros and cons in the human impulse to formal reason on the one hand, and in sensual emotion, on the other. According to Schiller both human drives are best tempered by one another through play — a dynamic which he captures in the following example of insincerity.

*When we embrace with passion someone who deserves our contempt we feel painfully the compulsion of Nature. When we are unfriendly towards another who commands our respect, we feel painfully the compulsion of Reason. But as soon as a man has at once enlisted our affection and gained our respect both the constraint of feeling and the constraint of Nature disappear, and we begin to love him – that is to play with our affection and our respect.*<sup>98</sup>

What Schiller regards as natural compulsion suggests the discomfort of enforced deference, while ‘the compulsion of reason’ suggests the burden of maintaining an artificial superiority. Yet no grievances are swept under the carpet here, and this may well be read as a more nuanced theory of virtuous partnerships afforded by the arts than anything in Burke’s earlier writings. The way Schiller deals with reason and emotion means that aesthetics take on the character of a Leviathan power, partly because he reaches something unattained by the European discourse of courtly love at the time. Although emotions were extolled, courtly love kept the emotions separate from the matters of the intellect.<sup>99</sup> (The latter were replaced by expectations of sublime sexual fulfilment).<sup>100</sup> But with Schiller, feelings that we may associate with domination and exploitation turn into mutual respect and intellectual partnership. It is also important to note Schiller’s ideas about time, and the possible command over it. For Schiller aesthetics proper are connected to leisure not to labour; only a class freed from labour would have ‘sound aesthetic powers and judgement’.<sup>101</sup> Schiller is certainly not interested in reconnecting art and craft, nor the sort of indigenous aesthetic education championed in England by Hogarth (1697-1764).<sup>102</sup> Drawing on Kant, *play* is the crucial element that allows Schiller to draw a correlation between representation and liberty; as can be gleaned from the way he sees insincerity turning into honesty.

Discussions which suggest that the arts capture hearts and minds for the common good are strongly inflected by these ideas.<sup>103</sup> Thanks to the combination of ‘opulence and genius’, European aesthetics were theoretically raised to the status of a Leviathan arbiter of the civil peace; and arguably this is the root of all sanitised ideas of art.<sup>104</sup> As a Leviathan-like power, what emerged was the ‘artificial’ force that Hobbes envisaged,

but one that was created by clientelism and to a very large degree depended on its continuation.<sup>105</sup> Yet if the revolutionary terror in France cast doubts on attempts to perfect society, aesthetics at least promised the perfectibility of minds. Thus the prospect of societies developing, and undergoing profound social changes, without too much pain, came into view. Indeed European aesthetics even suggest that painful political tasks might be transformed into pleasurable experiments. It is true that Kant turned Burke's notion of the sublime into a sense of freedom that includes a disavowal of mere sensual or bodily pleasures.<sup>106</sup> But we should not forget that in Kant's hands liberty was not something that should interfere with private contracts or bonds; he supported slavery.

Whether or not people are aware of thinkers such as Burke or Schiller, the aesthetic discourse of the 18<sup>th</sup> century underpins contemporary value judgements concerning art and culture. It is difficult to imagine many of the transactions occurring in the good-faith economy today if it were not for a deep seated interest in idea of the sublime, or the concept of artistic play. Schiller's separation of art and labour is a particularly strong influence which means that the things which command most attention in discussions of art and culture are routinely divorced from the quotidian politics of labour. In the early 1980s the French socialist government's cultural policy unsuccessfully attempted to support a culture of the workplace and allow the enhancement of trade union activities. The failure to do so indicates some of the democratic issues that have been veiled by 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics as a proto-typical development discourse.<sup>107</sup>

Needless to say, States are not always approached with the awe that Burke urges, and which the Leviathan is supposed to instil in citizens. A consequence of the wave of uprisings which swept continental Europe in 1848, and then the mobilisation of societies during the 1914-1918 war, was that the State gradually expanded into so many areas of society (the economy, education, culture, health and so on) that the distinction between State and society became more problematic and difficult to identify. The terminology of 'self-organising society' or 'the total state' described these developments.<sup>108</sup>

## **Art and Society**

The mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Seven Years war gave the modernising aristocracy strong incentives for considering socio-economic efficiency, and making reforms compatible with the advancement of bourgeois commerce. A great deal of Marxist writing, such as Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez's (1973), *Art and Society*, infers that capitalism is antagonistic to artisanal labour, and by extension to art, or at least a true praxis of art. The paradox which materialists may not have examined enough is that ideas of aesthetic autonomy coincided with the emergence of capitalism. It is true that the industrial revolution harmed artisans; they were dispossessed, regimented and exploited by new divisions of labour and they fought back.<sup>109</sup> However, it is very difficult to conclude that capitalism is at odds with artisanal labour and, by extension, with art.

From the booming production of tulips and oil paintings in the Dutch Republic of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (the proto-typical capitalist State), to more recent developments in light-engineering, cookery and software design, artisanal skills have been important to capitalism.<sup>110</sup> What capitalist markets really throw into disarray are prices and trust.<sup>111</sup> Dutch 'tulipmania' is an early example of prices skyrocketing and then, in 1637, crashing with much damage done to honourable reputations and good-faith.<sup>112</sup> Yet many horticultural artisans had become wealthy and the market in tulips continued. As the vicissitudes of the market became established as systemic norms, two things occurred that were to remain interconnected thereafter. Firstly, as we have seen, aesthetics emerged as a recognisable development discourse. As with massive land enclosures today, partnership was stressed, and institutions, learned societies and charitable agencies were created which mediated the social experience.<sup>113</sup> Secondly, as the peasantry was forced off the land, and a working class was born from industrialisation, solidarity emerged as the key to its political agency. Both these movements depend on building trust between strangers. However, the risks shared by workers taking industrial action only increase risks for owners, investors and traders. What the successes in the arts of the Dutch Golden Age suggest is that the arts offer numerous ways to foster trust in the context of new markets. The deepest uncertainties are naturalised; in Burkean terms they become matters of the eternal and sublime, so much so that even the historian investigating precisely these dynamics can fail to register the society's underlying forms of exploitation.<sup>114</sup>

These dynamics can be examined more closely in the following two cases of private support for the arts. The Baring Foundation, mentioned by Esther Salamon [**Appendix II**], was set up in the mid 1960s, reportedly to avoid the Labour government's inheritance taxes.<sup>115</sup> The foundation was the charitable arm of the Baring Bank which collapsed in 1995 because of the unsupervised speculative activity of one employee — Nick Leeson. The bank's more altruistic activities date back to the 1840s when it was involved in Irish famine relief.<sup>116</sup> When it closed, Barings was the world's second oldest merchant bank with financial capital accumulated over the course of more than two centuries. The Louisiana Land Purchase which doubled the size of the United States in 1803 was arranged by the bank. The first 'Baring crisis', due to excessive speculation in Argentina, occurred in 1890, and provoked a world recession. In an early example of the "too big to fail" argument, Barings was rescued by a consortium, including the Bank of England with additional support from the British government. Outliving the bank's final speculative crisis, the Baring Foundation continues to assist artistic activities which meet its stated purpose to improve the 'life of people suffering disadvantage and discrimination'; the Foundation's 'values' make its commitment to the voluntary sector equally clear.<sup>117</sup> Salamon and her colleagues did not approach the Foundation with many of the other projects they pursued aside from the AIDS campaign. This sense of discretion and 'brokering' — based on personal interaction and the 'trust' which Salamon talks about — must be considered to be one of the most politically significant aspects of the good-faith economy. Importantly this includes the appointment of trustees and administrators who are family members. Some foundations and trusts provide employment for children and descendants of donors.<sup>118</sup> Businesses cannot always protect themselves from the consequences of mismanagement and speculation, however organisations such as the Baring Foundation do protect family reputations, and more generally, they may advance employers' personal reputations.

The second case of private support for the arts is an unusually direct example of the risks faced by workers. Throughout his career as an industrialist Armand Hammer (1898-1990) used art to develop his business operations. This began when Hammer converted the profits from his Russian businesses during Lenin's New Economic Policy, into US dollars by trading in Russian 'treasures'.<sup>119</sup> Among the highs and lows of an extraordinary career, Hammer became president and CEO of Occidental Petroleum in 1957 which, in 1988, was found responsible for the Piper Alpha platform

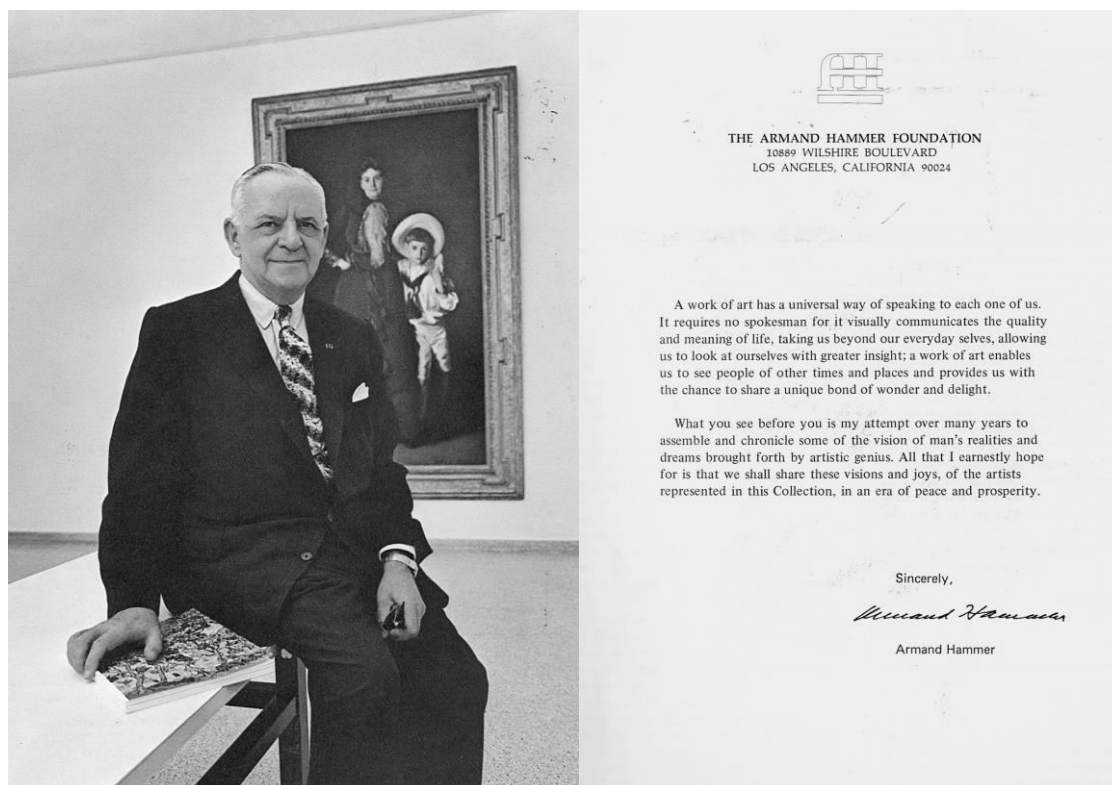


disaster in the North Sea.<sup>120</sup> Hammer's story, and strategy, prior to that, is partly captured in a prestigious catalogue published in 1978 on the occasion of an exhibition of his art collection at the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh (NGS 1978). This was one year after Hammer gave a large endowment to the Pier Arts Centre in Orkney, where Occidental was seeking local support for its North Sea operations.<sup>121</sup>

The introduction to the exhibition catalogue is written by John Walker who begins by saying that collecting art is more than just fun for Hammer. According to Hammer, collecting is 'connecting yourself with something that really is immortal, something that has survived all these centuries.'<sup>122</sup> This implicit confirmation of the Burkean eternal spirit stresses Hammer's deep commitment to making money for Occidental's shareholders and for himself; but in the latter case this was, 'For the sheer joy of giving it away.' Walker concludes: 'It may or may not be true that it is more blessed to give than to receive. But Armand Hammer would say that it is much more fun!' In the midst of the Cold War, this publication portrayed Hammer as an eminently philanthropic, peace-loving American, — able to boast of communist friends no less important than Lenin himself (1870-1924) — and the custodian of a great, almost familial, heritage. For left-leaning Scotland, all this provided a fitting image. **[Fig 3.3]**

As it turned out Occidental's priorities under Hammer's rather idiosyncratic management cost the lives of 167 workers on Piper Alpha. Clues to a negligent attitude were spotted by Hammer's workers.<sup>123</sup> And hints of the same management ethos are remembered by at least one person employed for the Hammer exhibition in Edinburgh.<sup>124</sup> In line with other US oil companies, Occidental's workers were subject to harsh anti-trade union practices. Long after Piper Alpha, there are still complaints about the effects of 'blacklisting' in discouraging workers from raising safety issues, particularly those of a structural nature.<sup>125</sup> In the eyes of trade unionists these problems have been exacerbated by 'behavioural based safety' regimes which stress worker responsibility for accidents. **[Fig.3.4]** Another factor are the 'sweetheart' deals whereby unions gain recognition and members (often with the direct assistance of the employers) in return for keeping disruption to a minimum.<sup>126</sup>

**Fig. 3.3** Image and text for the frontispiece of the catalogue, *The Armand Hammer Collection, Four Centuries of Masterpieces*, (1978) National Gallery of Scotland / Royal Scottish Academy. Portrait of Armand Hammer by Wynn Hammer.



**Fig. 3.4** Corporate gift from Occidental Petroleum; 'We Did 100 Days' tankard. Presented to workers for one hundred days of accident-free work on the Piper Alpha oil platform in 1987, a year before the platform exploded as result of the company's inadequate maintenance and safety procedures. Photograph by the author (2004), for Johnnie Morrison's interview in the *Lives in the Oil Industry* oral history project. (University of Aberdeen Library and British Library Sound Archive).



Arguably the widespread sense of trade union submission in post-Thatcher Britain was pioneered in the North Sea. This was one place where workers could have expected to see a resurgence of trade union strength, and perhaps compensation for the devastation of Britain's coal industry; so at the very least the repression of off-shore workers had a profound meaning. Of course, in 1978, none of this was apparent in a still Labour governed UK, but it is easy to see the Hammer exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy as an act of political courtship. This demanded the seemingly candid explanation provided by Walker.

By organising, the modern working class gradually gained political power undreamt of by medieval craft guilds. But capitalist industrialisation meant that workers never regained artisanal controls over production; with fatal consequences in some industries. The cases of Baring and Occidental are suggestive of despotic business tendencies, yet they also demonstrate the compensations offered by the good-faith economy and the Burkean ideas which help animate it. The above cases show the way the arts distinguish alliances and transfers of wealth which are lawfully made, from those that may be deemed despotic or corrupt.

Burke's 'politically well-wrought veil' mitigates, if not entirely conceals what — even in his own estimation — are ugly practices. This became clear between 1787 and 1795 during Burke's attempted impeachment of Warren Hastings (1732-1818). As Governor General of Bengal, Hastings was responsible for the widely registered abuses of the East India Company; the private armed empire within the British Empire; chartered and financially cushioned by the State.<sup>127</sup> Deploying the culturally relativistic arguments that are still used to show corruption in an ethically viable light, Hastings defended his conduct as necessary expedencies on the Indian subcontinent where, he claimed, despotic and arbitrary powers were the norm.<sup>128</sup> More acutely, Hastings turned Burke's philosophy of prudent reform back on its author by demonstrating his own efforts to make incremental improvements to the Indian power system.<sup>129</sup> Hastings, who had climbed the political ladder by his own merits, and had diligently educated himself about the cultures of the subcontinent, was also able to point to his good works that included founding the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Calcutta Muslim College. Facing a defence which so strongly echoes his own political thought seems to have infuriated Burke.<sup>130</sup> Despite Burke's appeals to Christian morality, alongside his

warnings that Britain's honour, and the integrity of its domestic political system were all at stake, Hastings was eventually acquitted in the House of Lords and went on to become a Privy Councillor.

In 1841, two decades after Hastings died, the Whig politician and writer Thomas McCauley (1800-1859), clearly an admirer of Burke, was moved to write an essay on Hastings's political life and cultural interests. In retrospect McCauley saw much to praise:

*Not only had the poor orphan retrieved the fallen fortunes of his line (...). He had founded a polity. He had administered government and war with more than the capacity of Richelieu. He had patronised learning with the judicious liberality of Cosmo.<sup>131</sup> He had been attacked by the most formidable combination of enemies that ever sought the destruction of a single victim; and over that combination (...) he had triumphed.<sup>132</sup>*

McCauley's essay points out that unlike the judgements in ordinary courts, it had been felt that Hastings's obvious political abilities and 'good actions' ought to offset 'some very reprehensible things'.<sup>133</sup> Another influence was the number of Indians brought to England to support Hastings. McCauley's story goes a long way to vindicating Hastings and comes from one of the key politicians who propagated the idea of the British Empire as a civilising project. McCauley made English India's official language, and his paradoxical admiration of both Burke and Hastings carries with it the realisation that the creation of an imperial Leviathan calls for balancing force and courtship, and that a man such as Hastings possessed that ability. We can examine this further by turning to the qualities of the spiritual aristocracy.

Arnold Hauser's (1982) *The Sociology of Art* argues that art ought to be regarded as a product of society, and society as a product of art. Rather than a circular analysis, this suggests that more attention be given to the proliferation of sociological categories linked to the arts and letters. In the present study 'the spiritual aristocracy'; 'bourgeois-bohemians'; 'the artistic critique of capitalism'; and 'the creative class' are discussed. These ideal types are in fact historically and discursively interwoven; it is the first, and oldest of them, that we can examine here. In *The Social Impact of the Arts*, Belfiore and Bennett (2010) point out that Europe's middle classes adopted the notion of an 'aristocracy of the spirit' in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a challenge to the authority of the old aristocracy. 'Nobility of birth' was giving way to the 'nobility of merits.'<sup>134</sup>

McCauley's account of Hastings's life — including his efforts as poet — is perfectly consistent with this development. In different countries concepts of culture, such as *Bildung* in Germany, laid considerable importance on the 'fruitful interpenetration of personalities'; and although these ideas emerged from the liberal intelligentsia, members of the aristocracy were clearly interested.<sup>135</sup> Amusements were increasingly frowned upon as the arts turned into an arena for the expression of virtue.<sup>136</sup> By 1851 Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) can be heard complaining about a 'frenzy' of virtue stirred up by aristocratic backed awards such as the Montyon Prize.<sup>137</sup> For anyone with a Burkean-like scepticism about radical reform, artistic merit was proof of natural inequality, and therefore the futility of egalitarian State action in areas such as education.<sup>138</sup> Drawing on medieval religious attempts to mould (*Bilden*) the soul in the shape of God, the arts assist the modern individual to be moulded in the shape of his or her unique and true-self.<sup>139</sup>

Belfiore and Bennett touch on the notion of a spiritual aristocracy in a discussion of intellectual currents that are shown as being largely internal to the arts and to European society. However, the factors that constitute any society (e.g. its political order; religious beliefs; social and gendered hierarchies; traditions and customs etc.) are not only efforts to establish distinctions and roles within society; they are also efforts to differentiate between societies. Therefore the notion of spiritual nobility ought to be looked at in the context of imperialism. When Europe's modern empire projects got underway the aristocratic dynasties had been avoiding marriages with commoners and intermarrying between themselves for centuries; occasionally across faiths. One of the justifications for resistance to formal sexual partnerships with commoners was the very doubtful claim that inter-dynastic marriages deterred war. In any case modern European expansionism was to be more aggressively policed. Although sexual liaisons between colonisers and colonised occurred all the time, the official sexual segregation which increasingly accompanied 'free trade', and resulted in the small number of inter-racial marriages, was unwaveringly exemplified by the aristocracy. On the other hand the political courtship between Europe old aristocracy and its rising middle class is equally clear. In France this was officially constituted a decade before Baudelaire's birth, when Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) instituted the concept of Nobility of Empire; an honours system designed to reconcile the old nobility and the middle class elites empowered by the revolution.<sup>140</sup>

As a proponent of an aristocracy of spirit Baudelaire exemplifies the paradoxes of these new alliances. As with the old aristocracy, members of Baudelaire's spiritual aristocracy are defined, above all, by what moves them, and what fails to move them.<sup>141</sup> The profile may fit Baudelaire most of all, but his shifting opinions are suggestive of the intellectual dynamism of European expansionism. From the revolutionary egalitarian beliefs he espoused in 1848, Baudelaire gradually turned into a supporter of the old aristocracy and counter-enlightenment.<sup>142</sup> Without such turnabouts, imperialism would have lacked the sort of dynamic historical and philosophical synthesis which allowed Europeans to create nations and education systems in their own image. In the 1930s, even as they wrote in opposition to fascism and Stalinism, intellectuals belonging to the widely respected New Europe Group in Britain, claimed that Europe was the centre of 'the intellect and co-ordinating mind of the human race'; the continent was the home of mankind's 'world consciousness.'<sup>143</sup>

It may be objected that my approach here theoretically reduces the arts to instruments of soft power. Indeed the questions, and the cases examined in this study, reflect the extent to which the influence of European aesthetics does need to be questioned in precisely these terms. So the critical reflexivity of people working in the arts is the central theme. As we have seen, the desire for a Leviathan takes on multiple forms. These conceptions of power and unity obscure the relationship between soft power and violence, a relationship which corresponds to what Bourdieu and Lacquant (1992) call 'symbolic violence'. What is at issue here is the reinforcement of hard power through cultural practices which may, at first sight, seem quite different, if not diametrically opposed to violence. In an influential anti-Hobbesian essay, 'On the Concept of Political Power', the US liberal sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) (1963) argued that power is not a zero sum game (i.e. there is not a fixed amount to be contested).<sup>144</sup> Therefore it would be wrong to suppose that the use of soft power means a reduction in violence; rather, it is a source of political over-confidence which can reinforce repression, and claim rights to kill. Sacred texts, such as the Bible and Quran, still offer the most striking examples of these poetics.<sup>145</sup> Although the discussion of art as an alternative religion is commonplace, the arts have largely escaped the kind of analysis which reveals concrete linkages between European ideas of aesthetic development and actual violence. Chapter seven examines Venezuela's anti-imperialist, and avowedly revolutionary, government policies and shows that Eurocentric aesthetics and politics speak to each other on these

matters in very complex ways. The political discourse on classical music and crime reduction in Venezuela may not be a source of violence, but the governmental discourse has underpinned the continuation of fatally flawed pre-revolutionary policies.

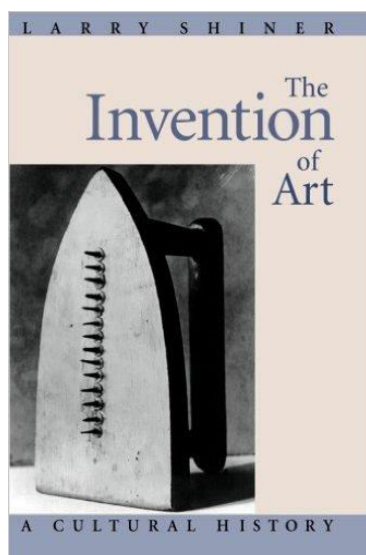
### **Good faith from below**

The popular mandate for egalitarian educational reform in Britain after 1945 was largely unfulfilled. The neglect of Labour's manifesto commitments in the six elections which brought in Labour governments between 1945 and 1974 does not appear to be the result only of a lack of political will in the parliamentary party.<sup>146</sup> Another agenda, aiming for nothing less than 'the total reorientation of the human personality', came from Sir Herbert Read (1893-1968), the poet, cultural critic and quietist anarchist.<sup>147</sup> Read's very successful book, *Education through Art*, first published in 1943, concentrates on revolutionising education through art rather than politics. Although Read's ideas about liberating creativity, in the broadest sense of the word, were not incompatible with Labour's agenda, the book sidelines structural issues such as the training of teachers, class sizes, leaving age, and the dynamics of segregation created by private schools; in other words the critical content of a socialist alternative. The currency of Read's ideas [Appendix 1] indicates a Schillerian-like movement in society which lent support to a reformist agenda more compatible with Burkean prudence. As chapter six shows, the faith placed in the creative development of the individual through participation in the arts was by no means the preserve of a conservative establishment, or intellectual elite. How may we understand this in light of the above discussions?

The Marxian influenced theory of complex normativity associated with philosophers such as Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), holds that true art is resistant to its exchange value in the market.<sup>148</sup> This resistance results in radical newness in art, and the dissolution of art forms as they become commodified and clichéd. If the political right casts the egoist-consumer as Leviathan, the artist in this anti-capitalist theory dumbfounds the desires and pleasures of consumer society, and eschews the traditional ends of great art. As the British conceptual artist, Jeremy Deller, puts it; 'Art isn't what you make, but what you make happen.'<sup>149</sup> In his study *The Invention of Art*, Larry Shiner (2001) traces this dynamic back to 20th century movements such as the Surrealists and the Situationist International which have attempted 'to get art and life back together' by staging happenings and actions.<sup>150</sup> However the art system he

discusses clearly has the ability, if not the need, to renew itself by incorporating such acts. So what begins in resistance to market values turns into magnificently presented ritual. [Figures 3.5 - 3.7] As Bourdieu (1993) points out the status of the intellectual and artistic avant-garde depends in part on rejecting normal commerce and so there is a social ‘interest in disinterestedness’.<sup>151</sup> Indeed there may be very little that unites the spiritual aristocracy other than the desire to ‘rise above the mediocre’ by working outside, or at the edges, of markets, and a willingness to forgo professional security.

**Figure 3.5** Complex Normativity: Larry Shiner’s 2001 book cover showing *Gift*, originally made in 1921 by Man Ray (1890-1976). Surrealist objects of this kind are thought to subvert meaning and in this case the iron could symbolise a malicious gift. According to the theory of complex normativity radical shifts in the form that art takes signal art resistance to its own status as a commodity. Cover: University of Chicago Press.



**Figure 3.6** Complex normativity: *The lights going on and off* (2000) by Martin Creed winner of the 2000 Turner Prize, London. Creed’s work, in this instance confined to lights switched on and off automatically in the empty gallery, is described by the Tate Gallery, as minimalist and anti-materialist. Photography: Tate Gallery.





**Figure 3.7** ‘The Battle of Orgreave’, Jeremy Deller’s (2001) re-enactment of violent clashes between the police and striking miners in 1984. Intended as an echo of the English Civil War, this re-enactment was turned into a film; an oral history project; and an archive acquired by the Tate gallery in 2004.



For Shiner ‘the answer to art divided [from society] is obviously not to reject such ideals as freedom, imagination and creativity but to unite them with facility, service and function’.<sup>152</sup> Attempts to connect art and society along these lines prompted a flurry of critical writing. The following assessments of participatory art practices reflect an increasingly obvious uncertainty about their broad political significance at a time when the State’s left-hand is being curtailed in most countries. In *Conversation Pieces Community + Communication in Modern Art*, the US art historian, Grant Kester, (2004) uses the term ‘dialogical arts’ to describe various participatory and community orientated projects in the US and Europe. Generally optimistic about these developments Kester says that ‘individuals can break free from perplexing roles and obligations reacting and interacting in new and unforeseeable ways’.<sup>153</sup> He does not mention Schiller’s aesthetics of play, yet his ideas about what constitutes successful instances of dialogical art — such as the Austrian art collective WochenKlausur’s ‘colloquies’ on social issues — are a strong reminder of those ideas about sincerity overcoming suspicion.<sup>154</sup> The artists in Kester’s account are mediators who challenge stereotypes and question identities.

In a critical essay published in the journal *Artforum*, Claire Bishop (2006) points out that social art practices ‘prompted an ethical turn in art criticism’.<sup>155</sup> A striking example is the 2004 themed issue of the journal *Third Text* devoted to ‘Art and Collaboration’, edited by John Roberts and Stephen Wright. In sharp contrast to Kester, Wright (2004) argues that ‘Art (...) is the chief obstacle to artistic collaboration’ and criticises the opportunism of the artist who manages to rope people into ‘some frivolous interaction’,

extracting from them some minimal labour that can then be turned into the artist's symbolic capital.<sup>156</sup> What is far more interesting to both Wright and Roberts is when artists do not do art, at least in any conventional sense of the word. In recognition of the fiction of autonomy, artists seek a 'practical distribution of their skills and competencies within a given place and context, and not as fabricated objects for the market.'<sup>157</sup>

In these arguments about social practice it is not too difficult to see the theory of complex normativity taken to its limits.<sup>158</sup> The problem (for Roberts particularly) is that when art dissolves into 'post-autonomous' collaboration, it is no longer able to function as art. Artists have to return to the art world to survive. However, for Roberts, this very instability of art as a category is what 'constitutes its relationship to freedom and human emancipation'. This Marxian optimism rests on the argument that the de-alienated labour of art is still 'a model for the de-alienation of socialised labour'.<sup>159</sup> Of course the collapse of critical expertise into a more widely socialised field is not a uniquely artistic phenomenon. As discussed in the last chapter psychotherapeutic expertise was diminished by a broad political battle over institutional care. Indeed art therapy's advocacy discourses sideline the scale of the problems and appear to renew the promises of expertise and art. So it is interesting that in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Eagleton (1990) argues that just because Marx and some of his followers have looked forward to the total aestheticisation of life, does not mean political capacities or socialist well-being ought to be anticipated in these same terms.<sup>160</sup>

Notwithstanding the significant points of divergence the critical accounts of participatory arts still appear intensely committed to Western aesthetics at least in the medium term. Therefore art is repeatedly associated with emancipation rather than courtship; and not more modestly situated as a mediation of commercial society in keeping with artisanal and entrepreneurial developments. Thus experimental forms of resistance appear magnified. A subtle example of this aesthetic vision is Claire Bishop's (2006) (2012) left-leaning critiques of the mores and structures of participatory arts today. Bishop (2012) defends artistic autonomy against official policies but importantly attaches autonomy to the general status of the humanities.<sup>161</sup> As she argues, academic capitalism subjects the whole of education to rigid monetary regimes which threaten the spirit of experimentation. The humanities are still the main

institutional arena which the ruling classes count on for an enriching education and where the classical discourses are mastered. If Bishop is courting sympathy from this influential sector, it is evident in her account of the Schillerian influence on educational philosophy. In keeping with Herbert Read's priorities, Bishop emphasises artistic experimentation, rather than class or equality. Indeed in a chapter on pedagogic projects neither is mentioned; trade unionism is ignored and the Summerhill private boarding school founded by A.S. Neill (1883-1973) is highlighted as a compelling example of critical autonomy making trouble for 'the parameters of existing social structures'.<sup>162</sup> Although Bishop anchors her critique in anti-capitalism she overlooks relevant trade union discussions about competition and pedagogy, and forgoes the discussion of reforms that would impinge on ruling class privileges.<sup>163</sup>

The discourse of autonomism that Bishop adheres to centres on the belief that art and ethics are quite different realms of value.<sup>164</sup> However, potentially, there is an additional explanation for the distance a left-wing writer such as Bishop creates between artistic projects aiming to liberate learning and the broader egalitarian politics in education. Here we can turn to Alasdair MacIntyre's (2002) *A Short History of Ethics*. MacIntyre is a Christian by faith and a historically reflexive theistic moral philosopher. Considering the Christian influence on egalitarianism, MacIntyre points out that Christian ethics reflect historical contingencies of the early Christians who only preached equality and fraternity for relatively small communities of believers who awaited the Second Coming and the end of history in their near future. Yet these ethics were transposed with the force of sacred authority to influence the moral economy of large societies with long term hopes.<sup>165</sup>

According to MacIntyre Hobbesian political doctrine is built upon the Christian doctrine of original sin, and both are false.<sup>166</sup> They frame the political imagination with a nightmarish account of primitive self-gratification and self-preservation. Therefore progressive desires are distorted, and large societies are robbed of socio-political powers and moral capacities. MacIntyre recognises that in practice fear is not what makes political systems work, and indeed freedom is a crucial governing ideal.<sup>167</sup> As Marx points out the opponents of freedom never directly oppose freedom as a value, they only seek to restrict the freedom of others.<sup>168</sup> Although the arts promote free-thinking, MacIntyre points to the historical paradox of the 18<sup>th</sup> century assimilation of

ethics into aesthetics, namely that moral issues of motivation and political agency are veiled.<sup>169</sup> By way of a corrective, he stresses the Aristotelian distinction between the politically given values of a society, (those determined by a Burkean sense of tradition or the state of politics), and the virtues required for its true well-being.<sup>170</sup>

MacIntyre (1991) illustrates the problem in the essay, *How to seem virtuous without actually being so*, which discusses the two radically different conceptions of virtue. The first hinges on the giving of pleasure or the causing of pain which, he explains, means that from an early age children learn virtues in a conformist manner by pleasing adults, and by avoiding punishments. Of course this may well remind us of the above discussion about adults *playing* with dominant and submissive roles. In their unsexualised form, what these dynamics represent for MacIntyre is a semblance of virtue perfectly compatible with the rewards promulgated by capitalism.<sup>171</sup> If all this suggests a playground of domination and submission, the development of Aristotelian moral reflexivity aims instead for a kind of self-mastery which puts the emphasis on the interdependency of virtues. In essence MacIntyre rearticulates one of the oldest standpoints in moral philosophy; that if virtues such as courage, justice, or temperance are not to become vices they must be inter-related and inter-dependent.<sup>172</sup>

In contrast with the separation of art and ethics MacIntyre's analysis suggests that rival conceptions of virtue still operate in society as a whole, and therefore in the arts. However, rather than breaking with Hobbesian theory, good-faith in the promises of freedom articulated by European aesthetics subjects the arts to a Leviathan shadow world (often referred to simply as "the art world") where gestural experiments supplant standard egalitarian discourses. The history of moral philosophy helps draw our attention to some of the less obvious ways that art and politics might speak to one another on matters of inequality and socio-political agency. In the next chapter I look at relevant sociological investigations of reflexivity which echo MacIntyre's concerns.

### **Conclusion: A critical hypothesis on good-faith economics**

Although support coming from the good-faith economy is precarious, it spawned aesthetics and has supported a wide range of artistic projects and social experiments rooted in that branch of European philosophy. As I have argued the legacy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics means that the peace-keeping role of the Leviathan sovereign merged into the role of art. This goes a long way to explain why faith in the arts makes the most

demanding aspects of democratic conflict evaporate (as Jensen observes); and why at the same time artistic value judgements had the effect of mainstreaming the cinematic representation of extreme violence globally. These two trends are not contradictory; the Hobbesian fear of war of all against all surely needs to be nurtured if a patrimonial order is to be accepted.

The two main examples of patronage for the arts examined in this chapter — Baring and Hammer — are among the more obvious transactions in the good-faith economy. Such foundations function to protect influence; and given the difficulty of maintaining highly profitable business activities down the generations, ultimately passing on influence matters more for the ruling classes. Hammer's activities suggest that the aim of philanthropy may be to lever power internationally. Yet because these forms of benevolence are local or targeted, they may be reinforced by slogans such as “think globally act locally”, the logic of which reduces the scope of political action from below. The case of the Craigmillar Festival Society, discussed in chapter six, shows working class activists letting the State off-the-hook regarding inequalities in education, and turning to the arts as a means of local improvement. In doing so, the political emphasis must, at least by degrees, turn away from power struggles between classes which give rise to State-wide policies.

Burke's conservative ideas of a sublime and virtuous partnership in culture still resonate, but few people are as clear today about the reformist restraint that was sought by these courtly means. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of duty, conservatives stress the voluntary character of civic virtue. This means they speak, at once, of the importance of virtue and choice. Therefore the conservative idea of civic virtue can be distinguished from ideas of virtue which depend on the mediating role of the State and democratic governance. So, unlike taxation, the conservative rationale of giving, (offered by figures such as Lord Young, see chapter one) lends itself to forms of courtship where transfers of capital are, above all, an exercise of judgement, and a token of the good character of the donor and the beneficiaries. This is an important arena for the creation of a spiritual aristocracy. What has not been discussed above is how such a rationale also relates to loans and to politically important lines of credit which influence State policy. I come to this in chapter seven about El Sistema youth orchestras.

Ruskin's criteria of heroism in commerce might flatter donors such as Hammer or Baring, especially if compared to the 'mega-philanthropy' of business leaders such as Bill Gates or Warren Buffet who decry reductions in taxation and appear to be mainly concerned with perpetuating personal and family influence.<sup>173</sup> Yet the more common resistance to taxation on the part of business leaders and wealthy individuals suggests a virtuous circle with the same result: Lower taxation = increased profit margins = increased capacity for giving = increased influence over matters of public policy (including issues of taxation and credit). Nevertheless, as I have argued the good-faith economy is considerably more complex than it appears from this perspective, precisely because it is an arena of courtship. If attraction is required, then more than one set of desires or aims need to be considered. A common business argument against progressive taxation is that it impedes re-investment in the development of future business. Similarly, there are numerous arguments which suggest the arts provide means for individuals to develop a future self. Potentially there is a mutually reinforcing relationship here that amounts to a form of governmentality.<sup>174</sup> From a methodological point of view this suggests that the dialogical aspects of discourse need to be examined more critically.<sup>175</sup> I come to this in the next chapter.

A critical economic issue in the monetary value of labour is the earnings that workers require to reproduce their kind. The son-preference mentioned in the previous chapter reflects the pressure to produce "bread winners" that is felt most sharply by people hoping to escape poverty. Viewed from a higher position of socio-economic management the reproduction of wage labour also prompts troubling decisions. Employers complain that education systems fail to meet their needs; but unless they are willing to contemplate higher taxes, and to weaken the relative capacities of the ruling classes, they cannot become advocates of fundamental egalitarian reform of education. There is nothing new about this dilemma. The economic pressures of the Seven Years War prompted similar uncertainties among the aristocracy. The patrimonial tendencies imbricated in aesthetic discourses at that time seem to have cast a long shadow on ideas of development today. As a result the working classes are given access to forms of education and personal development which do not assist their political empowerment as a class, nor interfere with the social reproduction of the ruling classes. I explore these issues further in subsequent chapters. If my hypothesis is correct there is no sort of creativity that the current economic order actively dissuades, except those that

strengthen the power of organised labour in the area of contractual rights and responsibilities. For this reason Frederick the Great's injunction to argue but obey resonates even more profoundly today.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Scott (1990) (ed.), p 278.

<sup>2</sup> Ruskin, (1931) [1862], p.21.

<sup>3</sup> *Winterhilfswerk des Deutschen Volkes* was the winter programme of the *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (National Socialist People's Welfare). These organisations attempted to regulate charitable giving in Nazi Germany. From an edited selection of filmed speeches available on You Tube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnpTWKKWQ1o> (Last Accessed, January 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in 'The flip side to Bill Gates' charity billions' article by Andrew Bowman, *New Internationalist*, April 2012, <http://newint.org/features/2012/04/01/bill-gates-charitable-giving-ethics/> (Last accessed May 2016)

<sup>5</sup> The idea of the ruler as the ultimate servant of the State was the key motif of Frederick's political reasoning. In this period the same idea is widely echoed. For example the Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany's 1790 political testament, written in the year he became Holy Roman Emperor, states 'a ruler, even a hereditary ruler, is only a delegate, a servant of the people whose cares and troubles he must make his own.' See Scott (1990) op.cit., p.19. One of the most important Enlightenment sources for this sense of governance is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1762 treatise *On the Social Contract* mentioned in chapter one. Rousseau begins his section on 'The Rights of The Strongest' with the argument that; 'The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty.' Rousseau (2003), p.3.

<sup>6</sup> See Scott (1990) op.cit.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Blanning, T.C.W., 'Frederick the Great and Enlightened Absolutism', in Scott (1990), Ibid, p. 276.

<sup>8</sup> See Andrew (2006), p.8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.11. Andrew provides a good deal of primary source evidence for his critique of the intellectual elite, including Voltaire's correspondence with Frederick the Great. In 1773 Voltaire reminded Frederick that his support for the art of ancient Greece did not mean he supported democracy which he equated with 'government by the rabble'. See Andrew (2006), p. 67.

<sup>10</sup> In the history of warfare Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) is remembered for making political beliefs a decisive strategic factor. Mercenary affiliations existed even in the religious conflicts prior to the French revolution. See Hirst (2001), pp.20-24.

<sup>11</sup> Kant (1961) [1764].

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Andrew (2006) op.cit., p.77.

<sup>13</sup> Kant, (1784) What is Enlightenment? (*Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?*) (Smith, M.C. trans.) <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html> (Last accessed, May 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant's version of soft power is the idea of symbolic violence. This is not merely violence which operates symbolically. Rather it is 'the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity.' This very effective form of power is accepted, in so far as it offers contest, negotiation and flexibility in some fields of activity, while repressing them in other fields. Gender roles are often cited as a prime example of consensual domination. See Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), p. 167 ff.

<sup>15</sup> See Kant (1784) op.cit.

<sup>16</sup> Hobbes, T. (1651) *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*. <http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3113/hobbes/Leviathan.pdf> (Last accessed May 2016).

<sup>17</sup> Kant writes: 'What a people may not decide for itself may even less be decided for it by a monarch, for his reputation as a ruler consists precisely in the way in which he unites the will of the whole people within his own.' See Kant (1784) op.cit.

<sup>18</sup> The idea that the world may perish so long as art survives is only really comprehensible in terms of this transposition whereby art represents the absolute sovereign. Paraphrasing the Italian Futurist, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's (1876-1944) slogan, 'let art be created, let the world perish', Walter Benjamin wrote that 'Fascism says, "Long live art, let the world die"'. See Walter Benjamin Research Syndicate, <http://www.wbenjamin.org/walterbenjamin.html> (Last Accessed May 2016)

<sup>19</sup> An important anti-Hobbesian sociology of power, that was to influence writers such Jürgen Habermas, comes from Talcott Parsons (1927-1973). See Parsons, T. (1963) 'On the concept of political power', in (Bendix, R. and Lipset, S.M. (1967) (eds.) pp. 240–65. Another important tradition of anti-Hobbesian analysis, focusing on governmentality and the complexity of *power relations*, was developed later on by Michel Foucault (1926-1984). See Foucault (1990), pp.91-96.

<sup>20</sup> Jensen (2002), p.201.

<sup>21</sup> See Piketty (2013), p.26 ff. See also 'Wealth over Work' by Paul Krugman (23 March 2014) *New York Times*, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/24/opinion/krugman-wealth-over-work.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/24/opinion/krugman-wealth-over-work.html?_r=0) (Last accessed, April 2016).

<sup>22</sup> See, 'Bill Gates dismisses criticism of high prices for vaccines' by Sarah Boseley (27 January 2015) *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jan/27/bill-gates> (Last Accessed May 2016).

<sup>23</sup> 'Wealth must be seen as a responsibility, not as a privilege. The responsibility is to create more wealth. It's like having an orchard; you have to give away the fruit, but not the trees.' Carlos Slim quoted in, 'Mexico's Carlos Slim is the world's richest person, passing Americans Bill Gates and Warren Buffett' Associated Press (11 March 2010) Online at



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[http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2010/03/mexicos\\_carlos\\_slim\\_is\\_the\\_wor.html](http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2010/03/mexicos_carlos_slim_is_the_wor.html) (Last Accessed, May 2016).

<sup>24</sup> For a close examination of Ruskin's ideological development and its roots in high Tory – anti-laissez faire beliefs, see Nicholas Shrimpton's chapter, 'Italy', in O'Gorman, F. (2015) (ed.), pp. 49-65.

<sup>25</sup> See Ruskin (1931) op.cit. pp.20-24. See also p.56 where Ruskin writes; 'My continual aim has been to show the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of one man to all others; and to show the advisability of appointing such persons to guide, to lead, or even on occasion to compel and subdue, their inferiors, according to their own better knowledge and wiser will.'

<sup>26</sup> As *The Telegraph* declared in a headline of 18 January 2013: 'Bill Gates interview: I have no use for money. This is God's work.' See, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/bill-gates/9812672/Bill-Gates-interview-I-have-no-use-for-money.-This-is-Gods-work.html> (Last accessed May 2016).

<sup>27</sup> Alexander and Rueschemeyer (2005).

<sup>28</sup> Mair (2013).

<sup>29</sup> See Bourdieu (1977), p.172 ff.

<sup>30</sup> On the development of the word *vertu*, see Hampson (1990), p.209.

<sup>31</sup> As the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld argues poetics should not be reduced to the romantic concept of poetry. Ultimately what is at stake here is the way we understand the connections between various forms of representation. Works of art and literature may contribute to social practices of representation and performance, but they are not the only instruments; nor are they sufficient for an analysis of poetics. See Herzfeld (1997), pp. 144-147.

<sup>32</sup> Bourdieu sees virtue as the currency of politics but he does not always distinguish sources of personal trust and validation, from sources of actual power. See Bourdieu (1977), p.194.

<sup>33</sup> "A mean gift" exemplifies the most obvious notion of giving that is unrelated to generosity. Some religions, such as Sikhism, hold that charity ought to be anonymous. Overall it is clear that as a virtue, generosity signifies much more than gift-giving: i.e. generosity of spirit; generous with time or patience etc.

<sup>34</sup> A former public notary, Klaus-Dieter Dubon, found Hitler's tax papers in Bavarian State Archive; these provided evidence of massive tax evasion. This appears to have mainly concerned Hitler's profits from the publication of *Mein Kampf*. See BBC report (17 December 2004) 'Hitler Dodged Taxes Expert Finds', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4105683.stm> (Last accessed January 2016).

<sup>35</sup> In his book *Drug Warriors and Their Prey, From Police Power to Police State*, Richard Lawrence Miller points out that the same legal reasoning concerning a lack of civic duty, rather than actual criminal offences has been deployed in 'the war on drugs'. Miller, (1996), p.70 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Trust Councils were set up to govern industry along corporatist lines. The idea of 'trust' replaced solidarity. Holidays were increased, and travel was organised on the basis that these were 'instruments to strengthen mental and physical capabilities and thereby increase

productivity.’ See Mason (1993), p.159. As Timothy Mason argues in one of his important studies of the Third Reich, this exhibition of social conscience was a small price to pay for the obliteration of free trade unions. In 1938/39 alone, over a thousand working class activists were arrested each month by the Gestapo. Hitler’s public policies concerning the so-called ‘honour of labour’ provided a mask and left the working class almost totally isolated. Mason (1995) writes: ‘In general working class protest and resistance in the Third Reich could count on no sympathy or support at all from any other social groups or organizations’. Apart from some Catholic congregations, ‘the anti-Nazi working class felt that it was surrounded on all sides by positive enthusiasm for the regime and by hostility or indifference to its own economic and political interests.’ See Mason (1995), pp. 269-271.

<sup>37</sup> The term ‘social poetics’ is used by the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (1997), who draws on Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology. In terms of a general theoretical approach both draw on the sociological poetics of the Bakhtin school of genre analysis in literature. However, Bourdieu and Herzfeld are interested primarily in social behaviour and agency. See Herzfeld M. (1997), pp. 142-176.

<sup>38</sup> See Benz (2006), pp.106-107.

<sup>39</sup> See Mason (1995), op. cit.

<sup>40</sup> An important consideration here is the downgrading of May Day from an annual strike to a demonstration and festival of labour. This was one of key political successes for Austrian fascism in the interwar period. See Hobsbawn, E. and Ranger T. (1992) (eds.), p.286.

<sup>41</sup> There is evidence to show that the State politics of the national community governed economic management. This meant that business interests, and Nazi party interests, did not neatly coincide to produce fascism in Germany. Rather what was vital was ‘collusion’ among traditional elites. See Overy, R.J. (1996), p.55 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Bourdieu (1977), op.cit.

<sup>43</sup> In the United Kingdom, Glasgow was one of the first success stories of cultural regeneration in the wake of industrial decline. However regeneration in the 1980s and 1990s was accompanied by this massive decline in the city’s population. The decline was very evident in some poorer areas. The Rev. John D. Miller, a former moderator of the Church of Scotland, who raised this matter (which was largely overlooked in arguments about the role of arts) points out that his former parish of Castlemilk lost up to two-thirds of its population. In his words; ‘The biggest single change in Castlemilk has been the disappearance of its population...’ See ‘A man of God and of the People’, *The Herald*, 7 July 2007, [http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12779576.A\\_man\\_of\\_God\\_and\\_of\\_the\\_people/](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12779576.A_man_of_God_and_of_the_people/) (Last accessed 11 November 2015).

<sup>44</sup> As Belfiore and Bennett point out, in the 1830s art for art’s sake was an instrument to challenge the logic of industry and commerce. Belfiore and Bennett (2010), p.183.

<sup>45</sup> Jensen (2002).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p.206.

<sup>47</sup> Effectively the legal instruments in this treaty provide for a protectionist Keynesian approach to cultural policy which also allows governments to invest in the commercial potential of cultural activity in their nations. See Unesco 2005 *Convention on the Protection and Promotion*

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of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Online at, [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=31038&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (Last Accessed October 2014).

<sup>48</sup> See Taylor (1997).

<sup>49</sup> See ‘Pornography Obscenity and the Case for Censorship’, by Irving Kristol, [1971] in Muller (1997), pp.358-371.

<sup>50</sup> See also Taylor (1997) op.cit.

<sup>51</sup> See “3-Judge Panel Here Declares Warhol’s ‘Blue Movie’ Obscene”, by Morris Caplan, New York Times, 18 September 1969, available online at <http://www.warholstars.org/andy-warhol-blue-movie.html> (Last accessed April 2016).

<sup>52</sup> As Lewis, J. (2002) points out in his study of Hollywood film industry and censorship Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather*, and Gerard Damiano’s *Deep Throat* were the two most popular films of 1972 in the United States. The US Supreme Court’s judgement in *Miller v. California* (1973) defined obscenity in relation to lack of artistic, scientific, or political content, and made ‘contemporary community standards’ the main criterion. This is indicative of the increasingly qualitative debate about erotica at the time. It is argued that such judgements and the ratings system were central to the commercial success of mainstream Hollywood films, particularly in a period of crisis between 1968-1973. See Lewis (2002) pp. 260–67.

<sup>53</sup> Francis Ford Coppola remembers Paramount studios expressing concern during the making of *The Godfather* that his film was not violent enough. He was told the studio was going to send in “a violence director” to assist him. Coppola responded by shooting a scene where the character of Connie, played by Talia Shire, is beaten by her husband; an intentionally shocking scene of domestic violence which has the effect of morally underpinning the murder of the husband later in the movie. See *The Making of The Godfather Trilogy*, by Jeff Werner, Paramount/Zoetrope (1991) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuEnjDaiEXQ> (Last accessed February 2017).

<sup>54</sup> In France where the representation of nudity and sexuality has been more tolerated, the rise of pornography in the 1960s and 1970s was countered with taxation measures. See ‘Et Dieu créa le cinema’ by Alexandre Gefen et Gabriela Tujillo, *Marianne* magazine, 24 December 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Jong goes on to say, ‘Sex today has nothing to do with revolution anymore. It’s about capitalism protecting little profit centers’. Quoted in Porter (2013), un-numbered pages.

<sup>56</sup> See Danville (2013).

<sup>57</sup> See Foucault (1990), p.155.

<sup>58</sup> Instead of looking at ‘the highest grade of the theoretical spirit, propose instead the inverted and opposite hypothesis that [art] is one of the lowest, even the lowest of all.’ See Croce in James (2007), p.146.

<sup>59</sup> See Bottomore, Harris, and Miliband (eds.) (1991), pp.246-252.

<sup>60</sup> Hobbes critically compares his efforts to Plato’s proposals for the rule of philosopher-Kings: Given that ‘...neither Plato nor any other philosopher hitherto hath put into order, and sufficiently or probably proved all the theorems of moral doctrine, that men may learn thereby both how to govern and how to obey, I recover some hope that one time or other this writing of

mine may fall into the hands of a sovereign who will consider it himself (...) and by the exercise of entire sovereignty, in protecting the public teaching of it, convert this truth of speculation into the utility of practice.' See Hobbes (1651), pp.226-227.

<sup>61</sup> See Brennan and Buchanan (1998), available online <http://www.econlib.org/library/Buchanan/buchCv9c0.html> (Last accessed January 2016).

<sup>62</sup> The model of the consumer despot first arose in the writings of the Anglo-Dutch philosopher Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733), particularly in his 1723 edition of *Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Public Benefits*. In his 1998 introduction to *The Power to Tax*, Ibid. Geoffrey Brennan writes 'To the extent that there is a model of politics here, it is borrowed directly from public finance. This is the model of the despot but here an egoistic despot rather than a benevolent one.' Ibid. p.7. This anti-social view of rationality is convincingly challenged by economists such as Amartya Sen. See Sen (1977), pp. 317-344.

<sup>63</sup> See 'Speech at Poznan Academy of Economics' (4 July 1996) by Margaret Thatcher. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/108362> (Last accessed May 2016).

<sup>64</sup> See Rancière (2004), p.86.

<sup>65</sup> The way that Marxists address this issue usually hinges on the concept of a labour aristocracy; a grouping which Lenin critiqued as the elite of organised workers that could be bought-off by capitalism. However some Marxists defend the political significance of purely economic gains of trade unionism. For a recent example of this debate see 'The Myth of the Labor Aristocracy', by Charles Post, in *Against the Current* July-August 2006, <http://www.solidarity-us.org/node/128> (Last accessed June 2016). A rejoinder to Post's arguments rehearses orthodox Marxist arguments. See 'Labour Aristocracy II: reformism and reaction', by Steve Palmer, in *Fight Racism Fight Imperialism* 196 April/May 2007, <http://www.revolutionarycommunist.org/britain/1035-labour-aristocracy-ii-reformism-and-reaction-frfi-196-april-may-2007.html> (Last accessed June 2016). The debate here hinges on the primacy of economic or political struggles: in other words to what extent do the economic struggles of trade unions turn into wider political struggles, or is it that broad political struggles are reflected by increased labour militancy? Empirical evidence supports both sides; and of course it may be argued that the debate is based on a false division between politics and economics in the first place. For example, at the level of so called 'economic' struggles, the varying occurrence of trade union militancy in the private or public sectors has always been a highly political issue with important economic consequences.

<sup>66</sup> A major issue in Marxist debates is the idea that the political agency of the working class is external to its economic struggles, therefore economic struggles and anti-capitalist political struggles may need to be somehow aligned from outside the workers movement. See entry on strikes in Bottomore, Harris, and Miliband (eds.) (1991), pp.526-527.

<sup>67</sup> Paying tribute to Hobbes, Cris Sheridan, a financial markets analyst writes of US data gathering that 'modern day scientists and mathematicians have breathed life into such an "artificial animal": synthetically human, virtually divine—a creature uniquely adapted to rule over the deluge of information and fake money we can no longer fathom or control. See 'Facing the Leviathan' by Cris Sheridan, *Financial Sense*, <http://www.financialsense.com/contributors/cris-sheridan/facing-the-leviathan> (Last Accessed May 2016).

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<sup>68</sup> Hobbes writes, ‘Nature (the art whereby God hath made and governes the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal. For seeing life is but a motion of Limbs, the begining whereof is in some principall part within; why may we not say, that all Automata (Engines that move themselves by springs and wheelles as doth a watch) have an artificiall life? For what is the Heart, but a Spring; and the Nerves, but so many Strings; and the Joynts, but so many Wheelles, giving motion to the whole Body, such as was intended by the Artificer? Art goes yet further, imitating that Rationall and most excellent worke of Nature, Man. For by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE (...). See Hobbes (1651), p.7.

<sup>69</sup> Quite apart from what the New York /Venezuelan filmmaker Maria Beatty says about her work, viewers will recognise the intention to represent sex artistically as she produces some films in black and white. These at least can be easily distinguished from most contemporary pornography. <http://www.bleuproductions.com/home.html> (Last accessed May 2016).

<sup>70</sup> Another example of the artistic experimentation with pornography is the 1976 film, *In the Realm of the Senses*, written and directed by Nagisa Oshima (1932-2013), and made as a Franco-Japanese production to avoid Japan’s censorship laws. As with Warhol’s 1969 *Blue Movie*, war is part of a holistic thematic approach through which Oshima seeks to ‘reveal everything’ and remove any normative conception of obscenity. See ‘In the Realm of the Senses: Some Notes on Oshima and Pornography’, by Donald Richie, online <https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/1108-in-the-realm-of-the-senses-some-notes-on-oshima-and-pornography> (Last accessed April 2017).

<sup>71</sup> Of all the political meanings of the sexual play I have highlighted, the most obvious are associated with the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814). His revolutionary sympathy for the proletariat was inseparable from the natural rights he thought belonged to his libido. See Schaeffer, N (2000). Notwithstanding the accusations of intellectual and sexual opportunism levelled against de Sade, we have already seen similar self-justifications whereby egoism turns into an economic rationality of the common good.

<sup>72</sup> See Hobbes (1651), p.61.

<sup>73</sup> See Passerini, (1999), p.195 ff.

<sup>74</sup> In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant argued that the new usage of the term ‘aesthetics’, from Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten’s (1750) *Aesthetica*, failed to subject matters of taste to rational principles. Kant argued that the term ought to be abandoned, or, by drawing on the ancients ‘division of cognition into *aisthēta kai noēta* [sensed or thought] to share the name with speculative philosophy. We would then take the name partly in its transcendental meaning, and partly in the psychological meaning.’ See Kant I. (1998) [1781], p.156. Of course the term aesthetics was not abandoned, and arguably it was in these dual terms that a new secularised philosophy of the spirit was established that would benefit the arts.

<sup>75</sup> See Prior (1839), p.43.

<sup>76</sup> Andrew (2006), p .176.

<sup>77</sup> See Kant (1961) [1764].

<sup>78</sup> See Ferguson (1992), pp.61-64.

<sup>79</sup> Burke writes; ‘When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are, delightful, as we every day experience. See Part I, Section VII, ‘Of the sublime’, Burke, E. [1770] (2014) *A Philosophical Inquiry into the origin of our ideas of The Sublime and Beautiful, with an introductory discourse concerning Taste, and several other additions* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide ebook)  
<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/burke/edmund/sublime/complete.html>

<sup>80</sup> See Part II, Section V. Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Eagleton writes: ‘The severely masculine law must become a cross-dresser, tart itself up in alluring feminine drapery, if it is to soften its rigours to the point where it can win our affections and cajole us into consent’. See Eagleton (2014), p.73. Although Eagleton stretches his point contra Burke, the history of the gendered divisions of labour, as mentioned in the last chapter) lend credence to his remarks.

<sup>82</sup> See Burke [1790] (1997) *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in Muller (ed.), p. 110.

<sup>83</sup> In relation to social contract theory, Burke’s social pact belongs to the English discourse on political power influenced by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704). In line with these thinkers the doctrine of original sin may be transposed into a socio-political theory whereby power is entrusted to a sovereign (God-like authority) responsible for protecting private property and saving citizens from the *original* state of nature; i.e. moral disorder and chaos. The question of private property is at the root of many of the contradictions which can be found in the English discourse, such as Locke’s notion of “tacit consent.” See MacIntyre (2002), p.152. According to MacIntyre it is only with Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) that social contract discourse becomes truly social.

<sup>84</sup> See Burke [1790] in Muller (1997) (ed.) p.110.

<sup>85</sup> Burke’s debts were cancelled and his estate at Beaconsfield protected thanks to his principal patrons. See Andrew (2006) p.174.

<sup>86</sup> See Burke [1790] in Muller (1997) (ed.) p.87.

<sup>87</sup> As Muller points out although *Reflections* was written before the violence of the Terror and the political and economic problems that would lead to rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, Burke quite accurately sees the problems ahead. See Muller, (ed.) p.83.

<sup>88</sup> See Williams (1962) [1958], p.31.

<sup>89</sup> See Burke [1790] in Muller (1997) (ed.), p.110.

<sup>90</sup> Sir Hans Sloane (1660 – 1753), a physician, naturalist and collector, bequeathed his collection of specimens and artefacts to King George, thus providing the core collection for the foundation of the British Museum.

<sup>91</sup> See Thompson (1968), p.176. ff.

<sup>92</sup> Schiller F. (1994) [1795].

<sup>93</sup> See Schiller Institute, 'Friedrich Schiller: Poet of The American Revolution' at [http://www.schillerinstitute.org/biographys/schiller\\_bio.html](http://www.schillerinstitute.org/biographys/schiller_bio.html) (Last Accessed February 2014).

<sup>94</sup> See Snell in Schiller, F (1994) [1794], p.12.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p.12.

<sup>96</sup> Eagleton, (1990), p.107.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. p.118.

<sup>98</sup> Schiller F. (1994) [1794], p.75.

<sup>99</sup> See Passerinni (1999), p.24 ff.

<sup>100</sup> Discussions of D.H. Lawrence's writings, and particularly the 1960 obscenity trial concerning his novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, (*R v. Penguin Books Ltd.*) were an important legal step away from the dichotomy pointed out by Passerini, Ibid. As Raymond Williams points out the significance of sex, in Lawrence's own words, is that 'it involves the whole of a human being'. See Williams R. (1962), p.213. Lawrence's holistic representation of sex was powerfully conveyed by Richard Hoggart (1918-2014) during the 1960 court case. Hoggart's testimony is widely regarded as a turning point in this landmark trial which found in favour of Penguin books and helped establish qualitative artistic values as a key legal reference point for censorship decisions in Britain.

<sup>101</sup> Shiner (2001), pp.150-151.

<sup>102</sup> As Larry Shiner points out William Hogarth, (1697-1764) the English painter and illustrator straddled the artisanal tradition and contested the emergence of an art world at the time. In 1762 Hogarth was among those involved in an exhibition using the popular heraldry of public house sign boards to mock the institution building and the pretensions of the fine arts. See Shiner (2001), pp.116-118.

<sup>103</sup> For the roots of the French version of Schillerian position, see Shiner L. (2001) p. 220. Eagleton argues that the anglophone canon of aesthetic thought, from Coleridge to Matthew Arnold and William Morris owes a great deal to the German tradition which he describes as 'the horse's mouth.' See Eagleton (1990), p.11.

<sup>104</sup> The alliance between 'opulence and genius' is a key theme in Andrew (2006), p.183 ff.

<sup>105</sup> Andrew argues that enlightenment thinkers philosophically merged the figure of the egoistic private individual with the more benevolent sociability promoted by aristocratic patrons. The result, he argues, was the creation of an actual civil society in the form of a 'marketplace of goods, services and ideas, complimented by the shadow market of patron-client relations'. The role of the Leviathan State which, supposedly, restrained contradictory and selfish interests, was supplanted in this way it is argued. See Andrew (2006), p.79.

<sup>106</sup> See 'Burke, Kant and the Sublime', by Gur Hirshberg, *Philosophy Now* (April/May 2016) [https://philosophynow.org/issues/11/Burke\\_Kant\\_and\\_the\\_Sublime](https://philosophynow.org/issues/11/Burke_Kant_and_the_Sublime) (Last accessed, May 2016).

<sup>107</sup> The Mitterrand government's overall strategy to promote cultural democracy stumbled on its own civil service and turned towards a 'festive conception of culture' more compatible with

neoliberal policy repertoire being pioneered in the United States and Britain. See Looseley (1997), pp. 117-122.

<sup>108</sup> In 1931 the German legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) argued that the State had been diffused and disabled by society. The political pluralism of society meant that parliament was no longer sovereign. Schmitt was later appointed president (Kronjursist) of the Union of National-Socialist Jurists and became one of the most significant intellectual collaborators with the Nazi movement's efforts to usurp powers within society. See 'When Parliament Cannot be Sovereign', by Schmitt [1931], in Muller (1997) (ed.), pp.267-74. It is tempting to critique Schmitt in terms of his opportunism but the more fundamental issue is his Hobbesian ideas concerning political deliberation and decision making. Jürgen Habermas points out that Schmitt's ingenious association of ideas makes normal politics banal and turns everything into a question of life and death struggles in the context of strategic decisions of global nature. See 'The Horrors of Autonomy, Carl Schmitt in English', in Habermas, J. (1989), pp. 133-139. See also Kahn, V. (2003) 'Hamlet or Hecuba: Carl Schmitt's Decision; in Representations 83, Summer, (Berkeley: University of California) pp.67-96.

<sup>109</sup> In *The Making of the English Working Class*, E.P. Thompson (1968) considers some of the most striking transformations of artisans' labouring conditions during the industrial revolution and shows how divide and rule tactics were normalised under the auspices of the 'free market'. Thompson shows that the political solidarity formed between people from disparate backgrounds, and with varied types of job and status, was not a mechanical response to connivance between employers or adverse economic forces. Rather the forces unleashed by the doctrine of *laissez faire* met with ideas of virtue, and particularly powerful notions of honourable and dishonourable labour; the latter was that which undercut workers' standards of living or put them out of work. "Snobs"; "Translators"; and "Scabs" were among the derogatory terms used to stigmatise overly competitive behaviour in the labour market. Workers' attempts to preserve their artisanal skills and associated levels remuneration from erosion, and total transformation by the factory system, required this militant sense of solidarity. Moreover, early on workers also recognised the international structuring of exploitation. The owners, employers and governments faced with this self-honouring opposition did not respond with repressive measures alone; indeed Edmund Burke felt that violent or explicit repression risked enflaming revolutionary beliefs and feelings. See Thompson (1968), pp.259-346.

<sup>110</sup> Fortuitously positioned in a number of ways, the Dutch usurped Spain and Portugal's dominance of the slave trade, and the emerging Dutch middle classes were able to take advantage of the conditions of commerce and world trade to a degree not seen elsewhere. It is here too that materialist art historians, such as Arnold Hauser, see the art market developing in a way that would be recognisable to contemporary eyes. As painters developed an entrepreneurial ethos they were at the same time exposed to the instabilities of free market relations. Because of his fame and his bankruptcy, Rembrandt (1606-1669) is often regarded as the first great victim of the new socio-economic circumstances. Hauser writes 'no earlier age could have moulded him into what he became, but no other would have allowed him to go under in this way. See Hauser (1962), p.207.

<sup>111</sup> As Hauser points out the explosion of speculation and the loosening of restraints on competition meant that most men, in this period, 'find it more and more difficult to fathom the decisive factors in economic affairs and are less and less able to exert any influence on them.' Hauser (1962), p.100.

<sup>112</sup> See Goldgar (2007).



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<sup>113</sup> A key theme of contemporary socio-economic development discourse is the effort to establish trust between rival social groups including foreign investors. It is calculated that between 2001 and 2011 in the global South, a land area roughly equivalent to Western Europe was sold or leased to foreign investors. See 'Dispossession in Rural India', by Dip Kapoor in Choudry and Kapoor (eds.) (2013), p.46.ff.

<sup>114</sup> In Simon Schama's (1988) widely praised history of the Dutch Golden Age, the author is clearly sceptical about the role of the fine arts in assisting 'the property owning class to pass off *their* culture as national heritage'. See Schama (1988), p. 4 ff. Despite Schama's sensitivity to the economic nuances of daily life, and the culture of the period, drawing as he does from a wide range of sources, Schama fails to spot the central role the Dutch Republic had in the slave trade. For more on the history of this striking intellectual lacuna, see Buck-Morss (2000).

<sup>115</sup> For the business background of the Baring Foundation, see Zeigler, P. (1988), p.362

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. p.130.

<sup>117</sup> See Baring Foundation, <http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ROA2008.pdf> (Last accessed, May 2016).

<sup>118</sup> The U.S. businessman-philanthropist, Warren Buffet, is a prime example of the far-sightedness and sense of honour that Ruskin urges. Somewhat controversially Buffet put some members of his family in charge of giving. Buffet writes that 'Too often, a vast collection of possessions ends up possessing its owner. (...) 'The reaction of my family and me to our extraordinary good fortune is not guilt, but rather gratitude. Were we to use more than 1% of my claim checks on ourselves, neither our happiness nor our well-being would be enhanced. In contrast, that remaining 99% can have a huge effect on the health and welfare of others. That reality sets an obvious course for me and my family: Keep all we can conceivably need and distribute the rest to society, for its needs. My pledge starts us down that course'. See My Philanthropic Pledge, by Warren Buffett. <http://givingpledge.org/Content/media/My%20Philanthropic%20Pledge.pdf> (Last accessed, May 2016).

<sup>119</sup> See NGS (1978).

<sup>120</sup> See Cullen (1990).

<sup>121</sup> In a 2014 essay reflecting on her professional experience in Scotland the curator Nicola White speculates whether touristic 'charms' gave Orkney's Pier Arts Centre an unfair advantage in the competition for Scottish Arts Council funding. See 'In Motion', by White, in Jeffrey (2014), p.16. For a telling insider account of Hammer's political priming the Orkney arts' scene see Timothy Halford interview in *Lives in the Oil Industry* oral history project, available at the British Library Sound Archive and University of Aberdeen.

<sup>122</sup> NGS (1978), p.4.

<sup>123</sup> Bob Ballantyne interview in *Lives in the Oil Industry* oral history project, available at the British Library Sound Archive and University of Aberdeen.

<sup>124</sup> On the occasion of the exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy, Hammer flew to Edinburgh aboard his personal jet, accompanied by a crated Rembrandt masterpiece. On arrival he opened the crate for the assembled media. During the course of this research I was told by a former exhibition attendant who wished to remain anonymous the following: prior to the

opening of the exhibition by Prince Charles, the exhibition attendants (mostly ex-art students) were summoned to a meeting to discuss security arrangements with a Senior CID police officer, and a security advisor from Occidental Petroleum. During this talk, the police officer emphasised that, “if by any chance, some a maniac was to come into the exhibition wielding a knife or some other weapon, intent on destroying one of the priceless works of art, nobody should be a hero. Don’t put yourself at risk by getting between that person and a painting. Your life is more valuable...”. My informant remembered Hammer’s chief of security intervening at this point and saying; “Yes, that’s quite right, but of course, if any of you were to try and save one of these works of art, then Mr. Hammer would see to it that you were handsomely rewarded.”

<sup>125</sup> According to trade unionists in the Norwegian oil and gas industry, the attempt by employers to address safety issues through ‘Behavioural Based Safety’, an approach which focuses on the responsibility of each and every worker, distracts from structural safety issues, and it may be regarded as an attempt to politically disorganise the workforce by turning workers against one another. Following accidents in the UK sector of the North Sea, in 2013, Oil and Gas UK, the employers’ organisation, stated that they were committed to stamping out ‘bullying and NRB [Not Required Back / “blacklisting”] type practices. See, <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/aug/30/north-sea-oil-culture-helicopter-crash-bob-crow>. (Last Accessed, January 2016) Two years later the ‘culture of fear’ appeared largely unchanged, if not worse, according to trade union organisers. See, <http://www.scottishenergynews.com/n-sea-union-chief-warns-holyrood-mps-of-risk-to-offshore-safety-amid-culture-of-fear/> (Last accessed January 2016) For an in depth account from Neil Rothnie, a trade unionist with experience in both UK and Norwegian sectors see, <https://peopleandnature.wordpress.com/article-store/the-north-sea-1-the-reaction-to-piper-alpha/> (Last accessed, January 2016).

<sup>126</sup> See ‘Many Sellers One Buyer’, by Jake Molloy & Ronnie McDonald, *Variant Magazine*, Issue 28, Spring 2007, Available online at, <http://www.variant.org.uk/pdfs/issue28/Monopsony28.pdf> (Last accessed, January 2016).

<sup>127</sup> With the newly independent United States as a constant reminder of imperial hubris, proceedings against Hastings began in 1787. Hastings’ defence claimed that ‘arbitrary power’ was acceptable in India, while Burke argued that this was a geographical distortion of the universal laws of God which ought to govern the behaviour of Europeans. See Ala’i, (2000), pp. 877-932.

<sup>128</sup> See Lee (2002), pp. 329-339, available online, [https://www.academia.edu/8379408/Relativism\\_and\\_Deviance\\_When\\_is\\_Corruption\\_Not\\_Corruption](https://www.academia.edu/8379408/Relativism_and_Deviance_When_is_Corruption_Not_Corruption) (Last Accessed, May 2016).

<sup>129</sup> Hastings (1786), p.10. ff. See also Nechtman (2010), pp.111-112.

<sup>130</sup> Nechtman (2010), p.112. See also Berriedale (1922) (ed.) , pp.114-155.

<sup>131</sup> Cosimo di Giovanni de’ Medici (1389-1464).

<sup>132</sup> McCauley (1841), p.255.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Belfiore and Bennett (2010), p.117.

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<sup>135</sup> See Humbolt (1969) [1852], p. xii.

<sup>136</sup> For example the prominent Enlightenment figure Denis Diderot (1713 –1784) justified self-regulation, bordering of self-censorship, on the basis that ‘there are some readers whom I do not, and never shall desire. I write only for those with whom I should enjoy conversing. I address my works to philosophers; so far as I am concerned, there is no one else in the world.’ Quoted in Hampson (1990), p.161.

<sup>137</sup> Baudelaire writes: ‘From now on sermonising will be the order of the day (...). When an author owes a few quarters rent he will dash off a moralizing play; if he is heavily in debt the play will be angelic.’ See Baudelaire (2006), p.114. The cultural historian Remy Saisselin (1970) points out that during this transition ‘certain nobles are seen to be cultivated when they participate in values which are commonly associated with the bourgeoisie rather than the old nobility (...)’. See Saisselin (1970), p.214.

<sup>138</sup> As discussed in chapter one an influential proponent of this justification of inequality is the British novelist and anti-socialist political philosopher, W.H. Mallock (1849-1923). For Mallock Burns and Shakespeare (as ‘men of no great wealth and imperfect education’) exemplify the inequality of natural talent. Mallock argues it is natural talents which make ‘great men’ and bring progress, not virtue, since virtue is not a matter of what person does, but what a person is. However separation of economic reasoning from moral being is not as clear cut as all that; caveats are to be found, for instance when Mallock writes of a manufacturer who provides affordable clothes etc for ‘the poorer classes’ but ‘without underpaying his employees’. See Mallock’s ‘Aristocracy and Evolution: A Study of the Rights, the Origin, and Social Function of the Wealthier Classes (1898)’ in Muller (1997) (ed.), p. 218.

<sup>139</sup> See Belfiore and Bennett (2010), pp.116-122.

<sup>140</sup> Indeed the violence done to bodies on other continents depended on this still chaste meeting of European minds. The merger of class interests is anticipated in the way enlightenment philosophers wrote of slavery as a political metaphor whilst turning a blind eye to the contemporaneous practices of turning people into private property. See Buck-Morss, S. (2000) ‘Hegel and Haiti’, in *Critical Enquiry* 26, Summer, (Chicago: University of Chicago).

<sup>141</sup> Baudelaire’s most well known exposition of these ideas is in the essay ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, see Baudelaire (1995), p.26 ff. See also Taylor (1992), p.436 ff.

<sup>142</sup> Baudelaire wrote retrospectively against the revolution of 1848 and asserted that ‘superstition is the well of all truths.’ See the Intimate Journals of Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), ‘My Heart Laid Bare’ XXVIII ff.  
[http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=2005\\_Q3\\_1%2FuvaBook%2Ftei%2Fz000000101.xml&chunk.id=d32&query=There+are+but+three+beings+worthy+of+respect](http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=2005_Q3_1%2FuvaBook%2Ftei%2Fz000000101.xml&chunk.id=d32&query=There+are+but+three+beings+worthy+of+respect)  
(Last accessed, May 2016).

<sup>143</sup> Dimitrije Mitrinović (1887-1953) who founded the New Europe Group wrote that ‘Being different from the other races, the population of Europe has always given birth to its contradictions and always with the chances of their solution in some ultimate synthesis.’ [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimitrije\\_Mitrinovi%C4%87](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimitrije_Mitrinovi%C4%87)]. For more on this influential network see Passerini, L. (1999) pp.128-129 ff.

<sup>144</sup> See Parsons (1963) ‘On the concept of political power’, in (Bendix, R. and Lipset, S.M. eds.) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) pp. 240–265.

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<sup>145</sup> In the Bible and the Quran, numerous acts of violence are dignified by spiritual dogma; erotic pleasures on are generally treated as shameful, although certain things now classified as abuses or crimes are actually licensed for the righteous. Steve Wells counts 2,821, 364 killings in the Bible which are brought about or sanctioned by God, compared to only ten involving Satan. See Wells (2013), p.12.

<sup>146</sup> The Labour Party victories were 1945; 1950; 1964; 1966 and in the two 1974 general elections.

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in Ross (1998), p.199. As Shiner points out, the fine arts are considered to be a surrogate religion because they promise a more varied, and less exclusive mode of spiritual development than organised religions. See Shiner (2001) p.306). The same might be said of the arts in relation the organisation of government policy. In the period after the Second World War in Britain, when there was a mandate for radical reform, and potentially everything to be won for those believing in an egalitarian State education, Read's ideas provided educators with an alternative authoritative script. [See Appendix I] Read's *Education through Art* proved to be more welcome than the Labour Party's manifesto promises concerning educational reform. If not exactly 'sacred', Read's ideas about the arts' usefulness for conditioning and emancipating the mind were certainly taken more seriously and given a high level of official recognition by organisations such as UNESCO.

<sup>148</sup> For a discussion of Adorno and the theory of complex normativity, see Zuidervaat (1990). Prior to this theory the American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910) observed 'saintliness' in artists' resistance to normal market values. See James [1902] (1977), pp.356-357. However James's spiritual interpretation is more psychological than historical. The philosophical intentions associated with alchemy and other esoteric theories of transformation (examined by historians of the occult such as Nevill Drury), are comparable to the institutionalised transformations which provide empirical evidence for the theory complex normativity. Base metals are not transformed into gold of course, but in both cases ritualised experimentation becomes the object of enormous investments. See Drury, N. (1979).

<sup>149</sup> See 'The Surrealism of Everyday Life' by Kevin Brazil, *Oxonian Review* (4 June 2012) <http://www.oxonianreview.org/wp/the-surrealism-of-everyday-life-draft/> (Last accessed May 2016).

<sup>150</sup> Shiner (2001), p.289.

<sup>151</sup> See Bourdieu (1993), p.40 ff.

<sup>152</sup> Shiner (2001), p.307.

<sup>153</sup> Kester (2004), p.6.

<sup>154</sup> This possibly presumptuous role is in continuity with Council of Europe policies of socio-cultural animation initiated in the 1970s. Writing at the time, Braden points out that the policies of 'socio-cultural animation' policies were seen by some as a deeply paternalistic approach to community arts. See Braden (1978), p.186. While Kester (2004) regards the dialogical approach as more accessible to public interpretation than the products of the modernist avant-garde, most of the projects he looks at retain a good deal of the artistic ethos of autonomy. When they do not, when they are manifestations or by-products of grass-roots politics, their status as 'art' is called into question, sometimes by their instigators more than Kester who clearly wants to advance a particularly social concept of art which, so far, only has a negligible relationship to the art market. Kester's main caveat is what he calls 'dialogical determinism'. This is the failure

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to recognise that ‘not all conflicts can be resolved by free and open exchange because not all conflicts are the result of a failure among a given set of interlocutors to fully “understand” or empathize with each other. In many cases, Kester writes, ‘conflicts are the result of very clear understanding of material, economic and political differences. See Kester (2004), p.182.

<sup>155</sup> Bishop, (2006), p.182.

<sup>156</sup> Wright (2004), in Roberts and Wright (eds.), p. 535.

<sup>157</sup> Roberts (2004), in Roberts and Wright (eds.), p.563.

<sup>158</sup> The same willingness to contemplate the collapse of art into politics is to be found in the Nina Felshin’s book on the overlap of art and activism in the United States, *But is it Art?* See Felshin (1995).

<sup>159</sup> Roberts writes that ‘it is the appearance of aesthetic labour in the realm of heteronymous, socialised labour that will unlock the coercions of the capitalist value form’. Here Roberts suggests that intellectual labour is the catalyst which society needs if capitalist coercion is to be overcome. See ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural Form’ in Roberts and Wright (eds.) p.563. Elsewhere Roberts argues that the sort of praxis advanced by the ‘neo-avant-garde’ anticipates the material politicisation of intellectual labour. See Roberts (2006), p.114 ff. However Hans Magnus Enzensberger, the German poet and cultural critic associated with the Frankfurt School argues in his essay, ‘The Industrialization of the Mind’, that: ‘No illusion is more stubbornly upheld than the sovereignty of the mind.’ Enzensberger, (1982) p.3. Enzensberger’s approach is of course an affront to theories of autonomy. It may also be seen as one of the discursive influences giving rise to the contemporary critical emphasis on the body.

<sup>160</sup> See Eagleton (1990), p.204-227. In addition to Eagleton’s note of caution we should remember that Marx and Engels’s political economy was not always in favour of the mundane political strategies developed by the proletariat.

<sup>161</sup> See Bishop (2012) p.7.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. p.274.

<sup>163</sup> For an example of long standing trade unionist’s engagement in the educational reforms which Bishop also critiques, see ‘Richard Hall’s Space’, <http://www.richard-hall.org/2016/05/17/on-the-he-white-paper-and-academic-practice/> (Last accessed, June 2016).

<sup>164</sup> The American art philosopher Noël Carrol is credited with coining the term automism. See Belfiore and Bennett (2010), p.176. A recent re-working of autonomism is Rancière’s relational philosophy of politics and aesthetics which informs Bishop’s (2012) *Artificial Hells* at several points. According to Rancière, (2010) *the aesthetics of politics* hinge on ‘the framing of a we’ (the organising principle being joint interest and group consensus) while *the politics of aesthetics* hinges on re-framing common experience as ‘the world of shared impersonal experience’ (the organising principle being autonomy and disinterest). Rancière 2010, pp.141-142. For Rancière, art and politics are twin areas of dissensual activity; the potential to disrupt domination and enact equality being the most important assets in both. He argues that there is ‘no [ideologically neutral] criterion for establishing an appropriate correlation between aesthetic virtue and political virtue’. See Rockhill (2009) p.205, and Rancière (2004), pp 61-62. It is ‘the state of politics’ which determines whether a critically innovative work of art is seen to harbour a valid critique. Aside from his stress on disinterestedness, Rancière is not very clear what he means by aesthetic virtue. This seems to be connected to the potential for critique, ruptures of

tradition or newness in art, stemming from creative play. He rejects shock tactics, (erroneously thought to promote awareness) and he also criticises certain explicitly political practices which he thinks conflate different aesthetic logics: i.e. aesthetic separation; the politics of representation; and ethical immediacy. The forms of criticality that respond to these considerations turn into artistic routine as opposed to virtue. In Rancière's philosophy, properly aesthetic judgements are relational rather than instrumental. Propaganda fails to stand up to his criteria for art, which presumably means discounting all works done to propagate religion. What counts in Rancière's estimation involves a *reframing*. Yet there is no reason to believe that all artists, writers, and performers wish to do this and —in Rancière account — it is not clear how and why some do meet his standards. I return to this issue in chapter five.

<sup>165</sup> See MacIntyre, (2002) p111-113.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid. p.178.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. pp. 132-133.

<sup>168</sup> Karl Marx states: 'No man fights freedom; he fights at most the freedom of others.' Quoted in MacIntyre, (2002) p. 203.

<sup>169</sup> See MacIntyre (2002), p.158.

<sup>170</sup> Robert Bartlett and Susan Collins point out in their introduction to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that the term happiness actually disappears in Aristotle's most famous treatise on happiness. Aristotle's *Ethics* 'acknowledges the power authoritative political opinion even as it refuses (...) to bow to it'. See Aristotle (2011 edn.) p.XIII.

<sup>171</sup> Indeed without going along with the behaviour that capitalism encourages (from the business of educational segregation from the earliest years on, to the speculation which, among its many damages, wipes out old age pensions), a number of subtle "punishments" quickly come into view.

<sup>172</sup> MacIntyre (1991) argues for the importance of religious education, and against spiritual wooliness in contemporary schooling. Against the rejoinder that religious schools have a very poor record of abuse and social segregation, it should be noted that MacIntyre is not propagating religion so much as counselling those who value ethical coherency to examine their traditions, and vocations, according to Aristotelian values. See also MacIntyre (1988).

<sup>173</sup> See *The One Percent*, (2006) documentary film by Jamie Johnson, heir to the Johnson & Johnson pharmaceutical fortune. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmlX3fLQrEc> (Last accessed, May 2016).

<sup>174</sup> The concept of governmentality, a key concept for Michel Foucault, asks us to consider how the body politic continues to behave as if there was a sovereign when the sovereign has been removed. See Dean (1994), p.156.

<sup>175</sup> The term discourse, as John Hartely points out, retains the sense of the actual turn-taking conduct of power relations, not simply speech. In O'Sullivan et al. (1994), pp.92-95.

## Appendix III: Biographical Narrative

### **Leigh French: From Real to Symbolic Violence**

Leigh was born in Manchester in 1969. During his upbringing he moved around Britain and lived for extended periods on the North Wales border, the East of Scotland and Northern England. These moves around Britain were partly a consequence of his father's postings as a Royal Air Force technician, and partly the result of his parents' separation when Leigh was eight. While talking about moving from place to place, he recalls his mother's precarious life and poverty. He also says moving around made him into something of a chameleon because of the way he picked up accents, yet the place that figures most in our conversation about his childhood, and which still resonates in Leigh's voice, is the former mining village of Darfield in South Yorkshire, close to where his parents were born and brought up. He attended secondary school and lived with his mother and step-father there. His parents were both from families who had traditionally worked the coal mines, and his step-father, grandfather and uncle were all coach drivers reliant on the mining industry for their jobs. On separating, Leigh's mother relocated taking him and his younger brother to live with her parents in their council house in Darfield where she found a job as a post woman which lasted for the next twenty-five years. Leigh remembers his mother formally sitting him and his younger brother down to give them what he recalls as the "you're not going down the pit lecture." Little did anyone know at this time that Leigh's school year group would be the last one in which the boys were invited to visit the pit *en masse* as their careers introduction to employment in coal mining. In keeping with her "lecture", his mother refused to sign the parental consent form, but it was the closure of the mining industry in the 1980s that guaranteed her wish to see the boys escape what was then a community destiny. At the same time Leigh thinks his mother instilled in him her Sunday school sense of justice and a work ethic that he associates with Welsh Methodism and her working class family background.

Leigh remembers the 1984-1985 miners strike as a relief from the internecine youth violence which he was introduced to on his first day at secondary school in Darfield in 1980. That day the police were in attendance and all the weapons they had confiscated in an episode of inter-school gang fighting the previous night were put on display. Over the next few months he remembers the toilet chains and lead piping gradually disappearing from the school toilets and how territorial aggression between schools reflected the different centres of mining in the

area. Against this backdrop of territorial fighting, Leigh recalls an emerging sense of solidarity among the young people being brought about by the miners' strike in the face of a now common enemy. However, during much of his time at school he felt he and his friends worked on the tacit understanding they were to "escape" both the area and the industry. In relation to Leigh's early family poverty, books were held with some reverence. Encyclopaedias and classics like Thomas Hardy's *Tess* were displayed behind glass. Later, in Darfield, use of the local public library was encouraged, notwithstanding the difficulty of getting there and back safely and the lack of space at home to read. Having been encouraged to draw from an early age art was an obvious route for him to take in life.

In 1988 he was awarded a full grant and admitted to the Slade School of Art in London to study fine art. Leigh remembers London as strikingly cosmopolitan after Barnsley where he did a foundation course. London was also an introduction to the sort of encounters and discussions he feels were particularly lacking in his upbringing in Yorkshire. Unlike the fictional character of Billy Elliot who makes a similar escape to liberal London – albeit to become a ballet dancer rather than a visual artist – Leigh's experience of the Slade served to affirm a sense of class distinction in him. Among his fellow students were those who belonged to the families that adorned the walls of galleries like the National Portrait Gallery and who were quite accustomed to such public displays of their profoundly private ancestral authority. It is in this sense of ideological validation and assertiveness that Leigh turns to sociological language and speaks about the "symbolic violence" he first encountered in the arts in London.

Among the formative experiences Leigh talks about is his next "escape". Having specialised in sculpture at the Slade, and following a wrestle with the external examiner, he graduated in 1992 and sought out and took up the offer of a British Council residency at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague later that year. Glad to leave the particular constraints of British society, and in some ways hoping never to come back, he found himself in Prague living in a good hostel with other international students some of whom were un-official refugees from the war-torn former Yugoslavia. He remembers the harrowing effects of the war on these friends and the poor reporting of the Yugoslav wars in the British media on his return. The year-long residency did not turn out to be the crucial exit from Britain that he wanted and in 1993 he applied to an MFA course at Glasgow School of Art on the basis that the students need not



specialise in an art form. However, when he arrived in Glasgow he found that he would need to choose a specialism and so decided to ask for supervision under historical and critical studies instead of the recognised departmental art forms. In this way Glasgow provided the introduction to critical reflection about art and society that Leigh sought. Looking back he argues that the art school and the city which has been his home for two decades now, have become increasingly parochial and given over to “exclusions based on political and cultural orthodoxy”. It was his frustration at the general acceptance within the visual arts of reducing debate to the level of gossip and whispers, so maintaining the privileges of uneven networks of communication, that led Leigh to help re-establish Variant magazine in 1996 as a free-sheet and online magazine devoted to ‘cross-currents in culture.’ Discussing this sporadically funded publishing project and the wider organisational work of Variant which became a central part of his life, Leigh acknowledges that its roots are firmly within the tradition of the Western artistic avant-garde. Indeed Leigh’s own inspiration for Variant was the New York community arts and media criticism magazine, *Afterimage*.

Looking back on his experiences of operating in-between the areas of art and politics as conventionally demarcated in Britain, Leigh values the space for free-thinking above all else and it is this space in the arts that he wants to protect and extend beyond the conventional understandings of what art looks like and what it ought to do. Although Marxism has been a very strong influence on this avant-garde tradition he stresses the importance of seeing Marx’s *oeuvre* as “one tool in the toolbox.” However, whether the new creative industries restructuring will allow for the philosophical development of the avant-garde tradition seems unlikely and Leigh feels pessimistic about the future, albeit only in regard to what he sees as the false optimism of those in power. In our exchanges about his experience of the arts, the dominant official image appears like a walled garden. Screened off from view is the ugliness of markets, the way they operate and the human costs of competition. Consequently he thinks the arts are used to beatify the ideology of the market. The paradox in Leigh’s view is that the arts – despite the communitarian rhetoric which is to be heard in these arenas – are really a “vipers’ nest.” On this journey from spaces of real violence to spaces of symbolic violence, the petty competition and backstabbing in the arts was made all too clear for Leigh at a degree show at the Slade where he remembers a fellow student urinating on another’s work.

## Chapter 4

# The Limits of Dialogue: Structure and Agency in Sociological Poetics

### Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research methods used in this study. As I discussed in the previous chapter modern aesthetic philosophy emerged under the patronage of the so-called ‘enlightened despots’ in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Given this historical relationship I have stressed Alasdair MacIntyre’s critique of the stick and carrot ethics he sees in capitalism and modernity. With these matters of soft power in mind Leigh French’s biographical narrative offers an additional perspective on critical reflexivity among people involved in the arts today. **[Appendix III]** Sociological poetics is a mode of analysis which explores the historical structuring of aesthetic developments; the first was the emergence of the novel as a major genre which portrays moral complexities in everyday life.<sup>1</sup> In this school of thought — founded in Russia by dissident Marxist literary theorists associated with Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) — aesthetic developments are dialogical. No matter how lofty, or closed-off from culture as a whole, or how much artists reject the moral standards of their times, they still articulate responses to moral dilemmas posed by the condition of society. The concepts of sociological poetics and dialogism which sprung from Bakhtin and his colleagues draw particular attention to the refinement of social differences and the translation of conflicts into forms of play.

The tradition of sociological poetics influences analysis in social science and the arts and humanities. As is often pointed out by its scholars, this theory of communication concerns much more than artistic developments; and it is particularly relevant to the forms of political courtship I have discussed which provide accommodations, and compensations for patrimonial power. Not as obviously utopian as Marxist dialectics, the dialogism at the heart of sociological poetics does not presuppose that class conflict might be overcome, rather that these conflicts take on increasingly subtle forms.<sup>2</sup> However an interesting example of dialogue breaking down, or turning into what we might call dialogical confrontation, is work-to-rule. This disruptive strategy exposes the crucial gap between contractual terms and the realities of labour. This militant form of play can also tell us that the social success of a structure, such as a business or an institution, depends very much on its favourable

interpretation. Social research is a significant act of interpretation, and in terms of methodology for the present study, and its general intellectual context, this chapter argues that academic researchers need to consider structures much more reflexively as this thesis aims to do.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky's (1821-1881) novels were an important point of analysis for Bakhtin, not least because the multiple voices and perspectives found in his fiction provide evidence of the refinement of artistic reflexivity about the divided character of society. According to Bakhtin (1984) Dostoyevsky's narratives reveal the separate planes of consciousness which capitalism presses into a contradictory unity.<sup>3</sup> Alan Swingewood, (1986) the British sociologist, and scholar of sociological poetics, says that such 'open texts demand open societies'.<sup>4</sup> For Swingewood this means that we should be attentive to the reception of literary or artistic works. Indeed from this methodological perspective which informs scholarship in art history, artistic talents are no more decisive or influential than responses. Meaning is structured simultaneously by authors and by readers or viewers. Yet if reading, listening or viewing are creative acts then as Swingewood admits, it becomes less useful to distinguish polyphonic or indeterminate works of art from those which are monological, author centered, or propagandistic, since all approaches are subject to counter interpretations.<sup>5</sup>

In making these observations (not long before the term 'culture wars' took a prominent place in Anglo-American political vocabulary)<sup>6</sup> Swingewood concludes that sensitivity to the complex social structuring of aesthetics, and to the possibility of bringing the arts closer to society, were blunted by an intellectual Marxism which replaced socialist practice with the critique of bourgeois culture.<sup>7</sup> Swingewood does not dwell on the problems of socialist politics at the time, and he seems more concerned that a dialogical and pluralistic culture may be threatened by overbearing academic critique of existing cultural institutions. However, if socialist practice was narrowed by Marxian academics, many of them were also among the political and economic losers, at least in the British university system.<sup>8</sup> Swingewood does not unpack the paradoxes of his conclusion, which contains more than one obvious problem; namely that if dialogism in culture is threatened by critique from such a politically weak quarter, it must be a politically weak idea. Open texts can emerge in closed highly repressive societies like the Tsarist Russia of Dostoyevsky's lifetime. While such dialogical works may

anticipate a moral reordering in society, the outcomes of the Russian revolution would suggest that this reordering is not necessarily synonymous with openness, democracy or equality.

Dostoyevsky's 'polyphonic' novels drew on his experience of extremely precarious political and economic conditions, and one might be tempted to associate the creation of open texts, or dialogical artworks, with firsthand experiences of disempowerment, and therefore with an outlook from below. However, as we saw in the previous chapter aristocratic patronage of aesthetics means that open-minded artistic production may be an instrument of economic domination as well as an expression of equality. My account of the patronage of aesthetic philosophy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century does not necessarily contradict Swingewood's argument that it is absurd to see in 'literature, art and aesthetics an instrument of class domination', indeed this would be to imply that the human imagination is a threat.<sup>9</sup> But historiography does reveal the arts as a key site for courtship between classes, and the roots of deep faultlines in socialist practice; Swingewood identifies the latter issue and puts the blame on Marxist theory.<sup>10</sup> However Robert Young (1996), the British post-colonial theorist and critic, considers Bakhtin's critical legacy in his book *Torn Halves — Political conflict in literary and cultural theory*; and instead casts doubt on the trust placed in the spread of open texts which supposedly decentralise power. At times, Young writes, 'this seems to imply that the diverse languages of different social groups will (...) do our politics for us.'<sup>11</sup> So from these different perspectives there is the strong sense of a cleavage between reflexivity and politics in the arts. I have traced this back to the material and intellectual investments in aesthetics — predating Marxism — as a source of Leviathan-like powers. I suggested that the significance of the good-faith economy is that it still locates creative play in the sort of socio-political courtship which underpinned the European Enlightenment. The contradictions and paradoxes of the period help to inform the main questions in this study: *how do the arts and politics speak to each other* and *what are the differences between artistic instrumentalism coming from above or below in the political order?*

Before discussing the methods employed it is necessary to consider in some detail what we mean by the political order. Commonly used names for systems such as feudalism, capitalism, democracy, even more refined terms such as patrimonial capitalism, may all conflate the theoretical issue of structure and agency. Dictionary definitions are of little help

in this respect although the changes of definition are revealing of what is at stake. Take capitalism as an example. In 1908, the Chambers dictionary defined the system as the ‘condition of possessing capital: the economic system which generates capitalists’.<sup>12</sup> By 1972 the entry for capitalism has been amended so that the system does not simply generate, but actually ‘gives power to capitalists’.<sup>13</sup> By 2014 the entry is revised more extensively and it now says that capitalism is ‘an economic system based on private, rather than state, ownership of businesses, factories, transport services, etc, with free competition and profit-making’.<sup>14</sup> Each Chambers’ definition gives a different view of structure and agency: In the first the economic structure seems to produce its agents; in the second the agents seem to produce the structure; whereas in the most recent definition, agency has been supplanted by economic structure. In striving for an apolitical and objective interpretation of capitalism, much inaccuracy has been introduced; in fact States matter greatly to private enterprise not least by limiting failures and managing competition.<sup>15</sup>

### **The poetics of conflation**

The British critical realist sociologist Margaret Archer (2003) (2010) argues that social agency has been theoretically conflated, so that the reflexive capacities of individuals get mixed up with the routine characteristics of social structures.<sup>16</sup> The distinction between structure and agency which Archer wants to retain may be usefully illustrated here by the Houses of Parliament at Westminster where Edmund Burke attempted to impeach Warren Hastings of the East India Company between 1788 and 1795. For Burke’s admirers this marathon trial exemplifies his independence of mind. Members of parliament normally debate and vote on policy and laws; as ordinary people possessing agency some have resigned or rejected honours etc., but Burke’s case against Hastings stands out as a principled action. On such matters of principle, members of a London council in 1921 went even further than Burke and refused to collect the council rates and were imprisoned as a result.<sup>17</sup> The important point here is that the formal structures of government have no capacities for acts of disobedience or illegality and, it may be argued, very little scope for the sort of moral condemnation which Burke urged on the basis of the East India Company’s dishonorable and un-Christian activities. Yet these same conflicts also point to the way that principled expressions of independence or autonomy also compensate for structural rigidity; and this role can be described as poetic. When William Hazlitt (1778-1830) criticised the poetical qualities of Burke’s political writings he was denouncing the contradictory positions Burke

adopted on the political issues of his time.<sup>18</sup> However it is through such contradictory standpoints that social structures may appear to have reflexive capacities they do not actually possess. The point of Archer's critique is that social scientists should not be fooled; structures are underpinned by routine action. As Burke argued in his Hobbesian writings on aesthetics and politics, stability requires submission.

Archer's theoretical critique has a bearing on artistic advocacy discourses. As I have argued in the preceding chapters these are sanitizing discourses which hinge on very partial judgments about what counts psychologically, politically or economically. An issue which touched on all three of these areas was the cinema censorship routines which — under the guise of artistic value — mainstreamed extreme violence as a means of competing with the increasing commercial success of pornography. Structural issues of this type are typically overlooked, or crudely simplified by advocacy discourses, so artistic values seem to have no downside. With that move, complex issues of public accountability are overtaken by the promotion of artistic benefits and financial efficiencies for public well-being.<sup>19</sup> Here Archer's critique is reinforced when we find various State, institutional, and business structures mixed up with the creative capacities of individuals who, it is supposed, enrich and advance culture and our everyday lives. Yet Archer's sharp distinction between structure and agency is blurred when a number of individual judgments, have a collective characteristic, and an ethical outcome that influences the structures of society. Burke's case against the East India Company, or the dynamics of censorship today are particularly striking examples, but the problem is equally pertinent if we turn to the roots of sociological poetics. Recognising Bakhtin's generalisations concerning the novel as a genre, the US literary scholar Wayne C. Booth (1921-2005) tells readers that vagueness is the price to be paid for tackling difficult and general concerns, and that 'what is vague from a hostile point of view is wonderfully "suggestive" when we consider it from inside the enterprise'.<sup>20</sup> As I argue below being on the inside and outside at the same time needs to be understood more critically given the role ascribed to universities by classical political economy. Intensive methods are required to interrogate reflexivity about art and power. More attention needs be given to the political and ethical structuring of the arts, with a greater sensitivity to the docility, if not forms of obedience, which the patronage networks of the good-faith economy can encourage.

The sense of positioning highlighted by Booth offers another angle on the rather dry theoretical question of structure and agency. In this study I examine the social aims which

people articulate through the arts, and the constraints they encounter from inside and outside the arts. It should not be forgotten that these constraints include the structures which make socially-engaged artistic activity economically precarious. It is significant that David Harding stresses the unusual security of his job as ‘town artist’. [Appendix I] However Harding’s is among a number of accounts which also suggest that self-imposed moral constraints are important in developing the sense of a common practice which can only emerge via networks of people who make similar value judgments. As we can see from Harding’s career, when these affinities become sufficiently established, the concerns of networks can turn into education courses and fields such as Environmental Art. If we are to examine the processes occurring on this mid-ground between structure and agency, a broad form of discourse analysis is required that is not confined to texts. Moreover, experience of the research field is an important resource, two of my case studies (CFS and Variant) draw on my experience of the organisations. Above all what needs to be analysed is the moral reflexivity that informs important decisions and strategic thought. This reflexive thought is not always made evident in artworks or publications, and even if it is, this chapter argues that the discussions may be misleading. When we refer to language, even to language which belongs to something else (e.g. the language of dance), we mean the activity in itself, whereas discourse also refers to other actions. As *languages in action*, discourses imply various decisions and priorities which can tell us about power, especially at the level of institutional structuring.<sup>21</sup>

Martha Nussbaum’s (1995) faith in literature as an aid to legal justice (discussed in chapter two) carries forward one of the central claims of the humanities; namely that the arts encourage reflexivity.<sup>22</sup> However Nussbaum’s choice of literature is at least as selective as Bakhtin’s sense of the novel; and her arguments echo the dominant discourse of the humanities which would suggest that reflexivity is a good thing in itself. However, it would be naïve to think that writers of sensitive reflexive novels cannot also lend support to inequality, prejudice or violence. Nor are such authors all guided by “vulgar” commercial motives. As I discuss later on, the complexities which Alasdair MacIntyre highlights in moral philosophy are evident in Archer’s study of reflexivity. Nussbaum is a professor of law and ethics and her arguments exemplify a type of moral discourse which is obviously less concerned with the difficult facts of an artistic practice than with its support and maintenance. Therefore the investigation of art and politics cannot properly begin without some critical reflection about scholarship which lends support to advocacy discourses; not least by

privileging artistic activities which do not openly contradict some basic Enlightenment values.

### **Thinking about the academic context**

What facts are available to us in the field of culture today would support the observation that the vast majority of what is done in the arts fails to get direct support from public agencies, or private foundations, precisely because it is merely symptomatic of broader cultural circumstances. For instance, within forms of visual culture, alongside all that is deemed to be pornographic we might think of countless clichéd scenes of rural towns and church spires, or the vast majority of urban graffiti which is confined to “tagging”. That someone like the celebrated English street artist, Banksy, turns graffiti into a recognisable art form, and considers the philosophical dilemmas of the genre in his film *Exit Through the Gift Shop* should not detract from his, or our, membership of the spiritual aristocracy discussed in the last chapter.<sup>23</sup> Nor should it detract from the fact that most artistic activities promise very little in the way of emancipation, and none that could be separated from simply having the leisure or means to pursue and perfect their techniques in the first place. The values of the Enlightenment were contradictory, or at least severely complicated by ‘enlightened despotism’ which placed a premium on equality — and quality — in the sphere of speech and ideas, but not in the sphere of economic rights.<sup>24</sup>

In terms of reflexivity Banksy’s film offers an acute perspective on avant-garde creativity in the visual arts. Supposedly subversive graffiti art done by a Banksy admirer is shown up as a tool of self-publicity; and resistance to the institutional and market norms takes on the appearance of just another commercial sham. All this poses the philosophical dilemma which forms the denouement of the film. In chapter two I discussed John Carey’s (2005) point that claims made for the arts as instruments of self-improvement look extravagant when put alongside more prosaic activities like first aid. Carey has a keen sense of proportionality. Were it not for his admirably transparent desire to preserve a small place in heaven for writers and readers whose reflexivity — so his argument goes — is aided by literature, Carey might have gone further and mentioned the reflexive discourses that become embedded in other activities such as cycling, climbing and rambling. These are significant examples, at least in the British context. As in the arts, it might only be a small fraction of cyclists, or rambles, who would go so far as to regard these activities as the source of their self-critical capacities



or sense of free-thinking. For a particularly influential minority however, our most important reflexive capacities are captured by artistic production and the appreciation of artistic works.

It is difficult to imagine the general faith in the arts as a source of moral goods were it not for the support of the good-faith economy; and particularly the institution-building which began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Burke argued that power ought to be articulated behind a political veil of virtuous activity.<sup>25</sup> The emergence of the university system in Britain was influenced by similar ideas in political economy. In *Torn Halves*, cited above, Young (1996) argues that universities became the concrete manifestation of Adam Smith's (1723-1790) sense of the 'hidden-hand' of the market; the mysterious force which is supposed to turn private vices into public benefits.<sup>26</sup> Increasingly distanced from their theological origins, and governed according to utilitarian beliefs in market efficiency, universities were at the same time expected to compensate for market failure. This paradoxical role calls for a greater awareness of the role of education in reinforcing monological accounts of arts. Typically these stress openness, curiosity and egalitarian ideas; whereas feelings of cultural suspicion, desires for distinction, and the failure to create egalitarian education systems in most countries, are downplayed, or entirely overlooked.<sup>27</sup>

The key criticism of the good-faith economy, as discussed so far, is that it strengthens patrimonial capitalism by distributing funds across society, courting respect if not popularity for the wealthy. On the other hand, economic and industrial globalisation are perceived to have structurally weakened organised labour in many countries. It should be noted that the political harnessing of organised labour via modes of organisation which stress partnership with employers, or which negate workers' efforts at self-organisation, complicates the idea of structural weakness. Nevertheless, whether real or imagined, the diminishment of the working class's political capital may mean that egalitarian discourses in the arts and academia move further away from issues of egalitarian reform, towards the seemingly more urgent discourses of the good-faith economy; namely assistance to individuals and disadvantaged social groups. Few artistic projects bridge these macro and micro level aims. In those that do, such as the dialogical praxis of Forum Theatre, significant internal discussion has taken place about Forum's shift of emphasis; more on individual change among "the oppressed", and less on tackling socio-economic structures.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the internal critique of this shift suggests that equality still matters in this artistic network.

With its roots in the Enlightenment, the idea of equality matters in sociology, and indeed it is only via this value judgment that social *science* becomes a plausible idea. Truth claims based on a belief in slavery, exploitation, the inferiority of women etc would not go very far, nor could the idea that social science is a critique of the ‘ways society systemically misunderstands itself’.<sup>29</sup> Of course this does not mean that equality always matters to researchers in social science. But if under the intellectual mantras of disinterest and contemplation, research is casual about the perpetuation of inequality, or explicitly serves the socio-economic order, the limits of reflexivity and critique tend to be glaringly obvious. The much-cited realist scholar of social science methodology, Andrew Sayer (1992), points out that trying to achieve analytical objectivity tends to disguise important value judgments in research.<sup>30</sup> The sort of misleadingly ‘objective’ description we have seen in a dictionary definition of capitalism is suggestive of the problem. Although social science seems unable to help people decide how to live, Sayer argues that in certain circumstances it helps us think reflexively, and this can change the objects of our knowledge.<sup>31</sup> These are qualified claims and I will argue later on that feelings for structure, and for agency, influence the direction of shifts in our focus. Certainly if researchers don’t think reflexively, the objects of research seem static and artificially distanced from the social and political undercurrents I discuss.

Another aspect of realist methodology which Sayer stresses is the dialogical relationship between researchers and researched. This approach is shared by anthropologists and leads to the description of anthropology as ‘philosophy with the people in.’<sup>32</sup> I have adopted the same approach to discourse analysis. Here it is worth reiterating Sayer’s argument that the narrative texture introduced to academic writing through dialogue pushes (scientific) value judgments into the open and helps social scientists get nearer the truth.<sup>33</sup> Yet good academic writing sits on a knife edge between the clarity of profound social critique, and what Sayer calls ‘fighting talk’ which, in an effort to appear on the right side, obscures the complexities of exploitation.<sup>34</sup> These points about the overlap between academic and lay discourses are particularly relevant because much of what goes on in the arts is deeply connected to academic knowledge about the arts; and the origins of this study exemplifies this linkage.

### **Aims, objectives and intensity**

The present study was funded by the University of Northumbria in consultation with Helix Arts in Newcastle. The Departments of Arts and Social Sciences of the University called for a PhD study of qualitative issues in the participatory arts, socially-engaged practices, and their

connections to well-being.<sup>35</sup> Originally named ‘The Artists’ Agency’, Helix was founded by Lucy Fairley, (1946-2016) a former gallery owner, who had gained experience of public-private funded art projects after her London gallery business collapsed in 1975.<sup>36</sup> Fairley (then named Milton) had succeeded in negotiating transfers of funds between potentially opposed groups and organisations. Having arranged a grant from Shell for an environmental group in County Durham, she went to the London arts and environmental/social justice NGO, Platform, and helped to develop ethical guidelines to address funding dilemmas of this kind.<sup>37</sup> Describing the genesis of Helix, when I interviewed her in 2011, Fairley said that it was partly rooted in the sense of having had little power over her personal life, and that she ‘wanted to bring ethics into the way [she] behaved’.<sup>38</sup>

Esther Salamon joined Fairley in 1987 and became co-director in 1990. **[Appendix II]** Early on in my research it became evident that over time the character of Helix projects had changed quite significantly; with changes in management, strategic rationales had shifted somewhat since Fairley and Salamon’s time. Although my research was originally conceived as a local study, the early exchanges about Helix projects discussed in the next chapter made it apparent that artistic social-engagement demanded a structural and political analysis; not least to understand qualitative judgments in the arts. I began with extensive readings of primary and secondary sources which provide historical perspectives on the development of aesthetic thought and artistic instrumentalism. Relating specific modern cases to a potentially abstract, or distanced, story of institution building and Statecraft is not unproblematic from the perspective of social science. However it is also acknowledged that if we are to understand structural developments, social science does not have a convincing alternative to historical interpretation.<sup>39</sup> For its part, the roots of western art history are in the Renaissance, and the important legacy from that epoch is the interest in the causes of changes in the form and content of art. However, one of the most contested aspects of the discipline is the role traditionally given to individual artists, or artistic groups, in explaining such developments. In his much lauded study *The Story of Art*, E.H. Gombrich (1909-2001) avoids many sociological and historical issues with a *a priori* statement that ‘There really is no such thing as art. There are only artists’.<sup>40</sup> As I pointed out in previous chapters, the seemingly unpredictable social distribution of artistic talents is seen by some conservatives to be evidence of natural inequality, and the futility of egalitarian reform. By exploring the way

historical changes lead to new artistic philosophies and radically new measures of talent, sociological poetics puts things the other way round.<sup>41</sup>

No thesis of this length could capture the whole political history of aesthetic philosophy, or the whole range of artistic responses to changing discourses. Notwithstanding this note of caution, at least one of the three areas of well-being discussed in chapter two (psychological; political and economic) is at the roots of all the forms of artistic instrumentalism one can imagine. An extensive study which surveys views on these matters would tell us about the breadth of beliefs in art as a means of promoting well-being, but it would tell us very little about the influences on people's reasoning, and how changes of emphasis come about.<sup>42</sup> An extensive approach might not always exclude causal factors such as changes in management rationales, or changes of government, but even these only provide a limited explanation of such changes. The differences between extensive and intensive methods are outlined in the following chart.

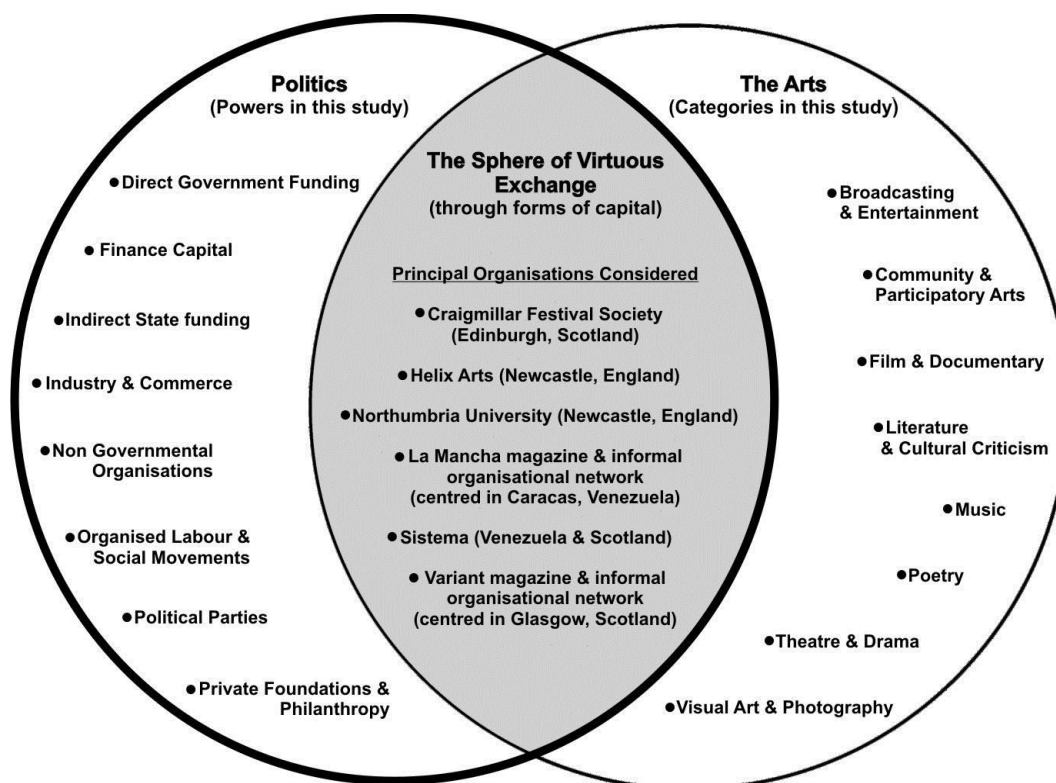
**Figure 4.1** Adopted from *Method in Social Science, A Realist Approach*, Sayer, A. (1992), p.243.

	INTENSIVE	EXTENSIVE
Research question	How does a process work in a particular case or small number of cases? What produces a certain change? What did the agents actually do?	What are the regularities common patterns, distinguishing features of a population? How widely are certain characteristics or processes distributed or represented?
Relations	Substantial relations of connection	Formal relations of similarity
Type of groups studied	Causal groups	Taxonomic groups
Type of account produced	Causal explanation of the production of certain objects or events, though not necessarily representative ones	Descriptive 'representative' generalizations, lacking in explanatory penetration
Typical methods	Study of individual agents in their causal contexts, interactive interviews, ethnography. Qualitative analysis	Large-scale survey of population or representative sample, formal questionnaires, standardized interviews. Statistical analysis
Limitations	Actual concrete patterns and contingent relations are unlikely to be 'representative', 'average' or generalizable. Necessary relations discovered will exist wherever their relata are present, e.g. causal powers of objects are generalizable to other contexts as they are necessary features of these objects	Although representative of a whole population, they are unlikely to be generalizable to other populations at different times and places. Problem of ecological fallacy in making inferences about individuals. Limited explanatory power
Appropriate tests	Corroboration	Replication

The present study uses open-ended interviews and participant observation to explore the development of ethics which are essential to any political discourse. Aesthetic discourses, performances, and works of art may register, or express ethics, but they should not be confused with the moral values which belong to people, not to things or events.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps the most difficult issue facing the researcher using intensive methods is how to select the case or, if comparisons are sought, the cases. Almost always, selection is guided first of all by implicitly political considerations such as the interest of funders and institutions in particular countries; and practical considerations such as knowledge already available to the researcher, access to informants, research costs, time and so on. The sense of feasibility in these matters marks out the field of enquiry in much the same way that an archeologist comes to a physical field for excavation. Not everything can be dug up, and important objects connected to the site might be elsewhere.<sup>44</sup>

The tentative lines and sections which archeologists excavate only reveal parts of whole physical record, but from these parts the pattern of larger structures or objects which have disappeared, is conceptually pieced together. The interpretation of this larger layout is usually informed by experience and knowledge gained from other sites. Similarly, as Sayer (1992) points out, intensive investigations in social science call for corroboration internally, and externally, in following-on research.<sup>45</sup> Peoples' ideas and practices need to be cross-checked to see if they are really common ideas and practices; therefore this study looks at artistic instrumentalism over time, and under different political and historical conditions.<sup>46</sup> As original research contributing to the understanding of the good-faith economy, broadly speaking it corroborates Bourdieu's (1977) ethnography from Algeria. However, my original objective was to compare socially-engaged art practices, and to identify critical political differences. To this end I began by speaking to people connected to the range of arts organisations at the centre of the following diagram.

**Figure 4.2** The research field and the main organisations and networks examined in the present study.



The Craigmillar Festival Society (CFS) was instigated by women connected to local Labour Party circles in Edinburgh during the 1960s. From grass-roots beginnings in a marginalised community, the CFS grew to be a much larger participatory arts organisation than Helix, however it was closed down by local government in 2002 after a public investigation into the alleged improper use of funding.<sup>47</sup> Of the many positive appraisals of the CFS, most stress its combination of social-welfare activities allied to participatory-artistic projects. However, not all the people I contacted would suggest that artistic social-engagement is necessarily linked to directly widening participation in artistic activities. Variant magazine, devoted to ‘cross currents in culture’ was started-off by male art school graduates in Glasgow. From 1996 this free newsprint and online publication was run by a small, more disparate group of intellectuals critically engaged with the nexus of economic and cultural policy. Variant was forced to suspend publication in 2012 when the government agency, Creative Scotland, refused to renew funding.<sup>48</sup> I had experience of working with both CFS and Variant as a photographer, and as a contributing editor, respectively. Considering these experiences —from the outside — was useful in deepening my knowledge of the groups, their networks, and the research field in general.

Like most of the arts organisations mentioned in this study, Helix, CFS, and Variant relied on a mixture of public and private/charitable funding, and just as importantly the goodwill of people towards their artistic strategies, political discourses and aims.<sup>49</sup> The voluntary or low-paid labour that is often important to the survival of such organisations brings up the issue of ‘self-exploitation’ discussed in later chapters. As someone perhaps too familiar with goodwill towards work in the arts, this aspect of artistic social-engagement was not immediately significant to me. And as in many interdisciplinary studies, exactly what constituted the field of research was a difficult question. The synthesis of the art history and social science was especially perplexing because an increasing range of activities may be counted as artistic contributions to well-being and, as discussed in chapter two the conception of well-being is contested in its own right. Moreover socially-engaged projects are usually linked to institutional networks and their effects are very difficult to disaggregate from the benefits or the problems of these wider associations. This vagueness may indeed be ‘wonderfully suggestive’ of all sorts of difficult-to-fathom benefits stemming from artistic social-engagement, but it also signals the influence of good-faith economics whereby private finance, voluntarism and expressions of civic virtue generate public funding and publicity, if not a sense of public optimism.

Once the influences of good-faith economics were recognised from Bourdieu, the aims of this study became less about testing artistic claims, and more to do with examining the development of good-faith through European aesthetic discourses. Jensen’s (2002), critique of the arts as a moral tonic to be administered to society requires this historical perspective given in the previous chapter. Were it not for the history of political and intellectual investments in the arts they would probably be more open to analysis of the forms of exploitation and inequality they perpetuate. Or, to put it another way, societies would perhaps be closer to coming to terms with the problems. Yet, one does not have to dig deeply to find the harsh experiences of competition and status seeking which Leigh French of Variant points to when he speaks of the arts as a ‘vipers nest’. **[Appendix III]** This makes the arts a very odd focal point for the study of well-being. More general achievements and aims in education, health and economic prosperity must be kept in mind at all times. In this respect Venezuela’s avowedly anti-neoliberal revolution offered an ideal comparative context because during this study the country’s policies — described as ‘21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism’ — claimed to be tackling the structures of inequality at local, national and international levels.

How did art and politics speak to one another in the radicalised context of Venezuela? To examine this consistently I explored networks which approximate those I discuss in the UK.<sup>50</sup> Helix and CFS in the UK are cases of organisations which become well established, and integrated with governmental programs and objectives for civil society. In this respect the important similarities are not related to art forms. Genres such as Afro Reggae music in Brazil are drawn into what George Yudice (2003), mentioned in chapter one, calls ‘the NGOisation of culture.’<sup>51</sup> Yudice quotes an Afro Reggae DJ who speaks of the depoliticising pressures of the entertainment industry and compares coping with these pressures to a wager to ‘dance with the devil and not be burned’; but exactly the same could be said of NGOisation.<sup>52</sup> The more organisations become integrated in these efforts to articulate civil society, the greater is the pressure for professionalisation and for activities to be underpinned by clear internal hierarchies and divisions of labour. Thus artistic, managerial and political activities can be distinguished in fairly traditional terms and, as with Helix, business-like administration may be emulated. El Sistema’s youth orchestras, founded in Venezuela, have become well established along these lines, and the organisation inspires off-shoots in many countries, including the UK. The ways Sistema’s discourse of social-engagement bridges the different national research contexts of this study makes it an ideal comparative case. Moreover Sistema responds to the same issue of depravation in musical education often said to have sparked the creation of the CFS in the 1960s. However, CFS and El Sistema come from opposite ends of politics; the women who began the CFS were at the margins of political power and influence, while the founders of El Sistema, and Sistema Scotland, have occupied very prominent positions during most of their working lives. The political visibility and influence of the CFS (at the highpoint of its funding), and that of El Sistema today, strongly suggests the continued transposition of matters of educational inequality into aesthetic and creative discourses.

La Mancha, a relatively little known publishing and broadcasting organisation based in Caracas, is similar to Variant magazine. As a further illustration of critiques of conventional artistic outcomes and measures of quality voiced by David Harding, **[Appendix I]** both Variant and La Mancha’s avant-garde practices and networks of association extend well ‘beyond the conventional understandings of what art looks like and what it ought to do’.<sup>53</sup> However, going further than Harding, the willingness in Variant and La Mancha circles to collapse politics and creative practice, or at least not to distinguish the two, means that such groups are reluctant to adhere to the formal divisions of labour that can be seen in more



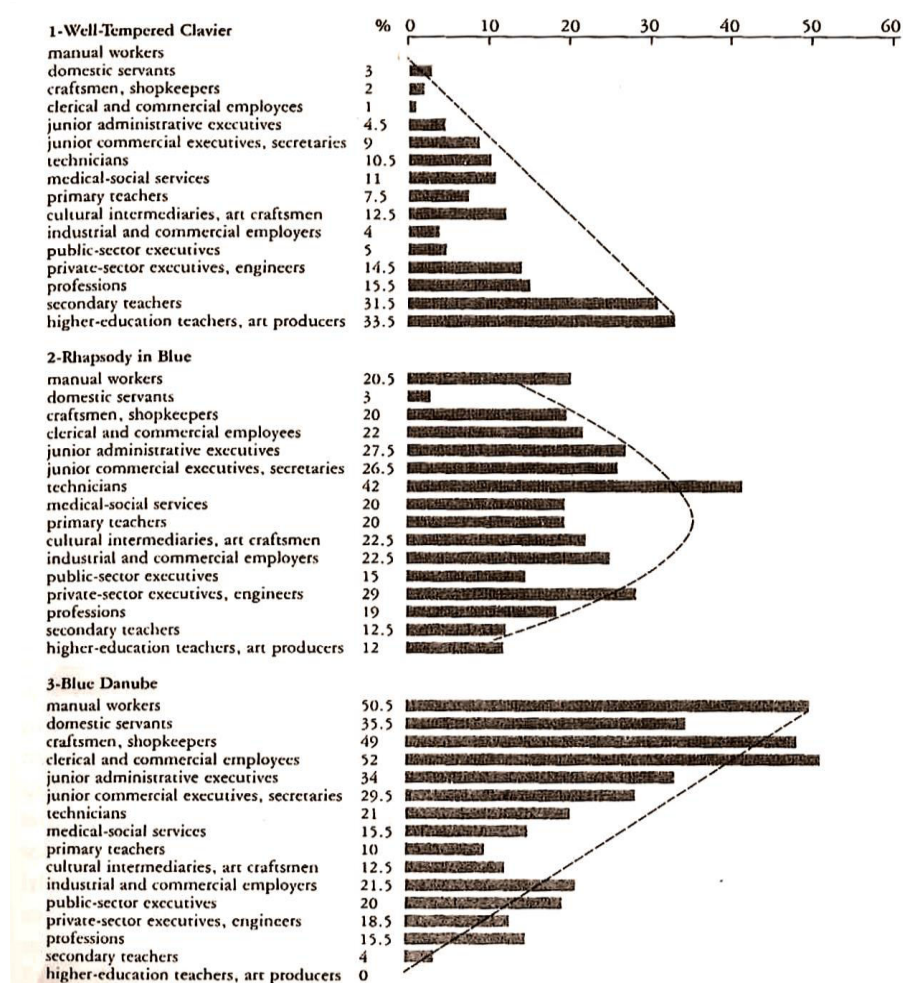
established organisations. The organisation of La Mancha and Variant reflects dialogical praxis. Broadly speaking their approach is congruent with the idea of ‘social flatness’ spoken about by Esther Salamon [Appendix II].<sup>54</sup> However, it must be stressed that the relatively small scale and precarity of these organisations does not mean they are always at the margins of established institutional or governmental networks. Although their survival is very uncertain, and there are increasing pressures to adopt business-like organisation, without some level of support coming from funders, from institutions, and key actors in the spheres of politics and/or in the arts, they would never be able to get off the ground and develop. Therefore it would be mistaken to look for key differences in artistic instrumentalism simply by distinguishing different class origins, or the adherence to monological or dialogical practices. Of course the political status quo in a nation will favour some styles of organisation more than others, but the good-faith economy also embraces such differences. This study argues that what really distinguishes artistic social-engagement from below is its multi-faceted character. If patrimonial capitalism courts reductive discourses, or single-issue activism, artistic social-engagement from below appears to respond with a critical mixture of social aims and artistic practices that is comparable to open texts. Nevertheless, the theoretical issues of structure and agency complicate this picture of critical dialogism and will point us towards the making and unmaking of classes.

Traditionally art historians looked at art objects or performances as the specific keys to the meaning of art practices. This approach, which appears to echo the interests of the connoisseur or the formalist, is a key point of methodological critique in the development of art history.<sup>55</sup> The traditional approach survives to some extent but it seems especially problematic in relation to assessing instrumental art practices which are managerially and conceptually multi-layered, and stem from networks of association and mutual support. We need to grasp the structural-routine characteristics of these networks as well as the subtle forms of political courtship; a combination of practices often described as soft power. Therefore this study concentrates on the strategic and ethical reasoning behind socially-engaged practices since it is here that terms of courtship in the good-faith economy are developed. Individuals and organisations which are not mentioned above will come into view because strategic reasoning occurs through such communicative networks; they shape discourses and set priorities in relation to powerful structures in society.<sup>56</sup>

## Feeling for structures<sup>57</sup>

The tradition of sociological poetics is taken up in Pierre Bourdieu's sociology which describes the patterning of cultural tastes according to class. The field of culture shown below is not static, [Fig. 4.3] rather in this instance class is mediated by shifts in musical taste that correlate with types of employment.

**Figure 4.3** 'Distribution of preferences for three musical works by class fraction.' Adopted from *Distinction - A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Bourdieu, (2000).<sup>58</sup> Marking opposite poles in the correlation between class and musical tastes are *The Blue Danube*, (wholly disregarded by higher education teachers and art producers), and *The Well Tempered Clavier*, (almost equally disliked by manual workers).



Arguably, Bourdieu is above all a critical theorist of social mobility. Feelings for art, and cultural tastes more generally, correspond with the species of (social, cultural, and symbolic) capital which people acquire to maintain, or advance their socio-economic status. For Bourdieu, social forms of capital have a crucial role in economic domination and the perpetuation of inequality. His theory tries to address all that is lacking in the dictionary

definition of capitalism. However, a common criticism of Bourdieu is that he theoretically locks people into subjective dispositions which they rarely overcome through structural change.<sup>59</sup> As I pointed out in chapter one, Bourdieu has surprisingly little to say about the sources or uses of political capital. Indeed, the structures of economic inequality appear quite stable in Bourdieu's sociology despite historical developments associated with the rise of labour movements and the political struggles within them. Nevertheless Bourdieu does stress the way people's dispositions in the cultural field *refract* — rather than simply reflect — structural pressures.<sup>60</sup> Refraction gives culture the poetic and elastic qualities which can be seen in the above survey. In preferences for musical works we can see dramatic divergences; particularly between manual workers and higher education teachers/art producers. Yet there is a great degree of convergence between the same groups when it comes to 'Rhapsody in Blue', George Gershwin's (1898-1937) fusion of jazz and classical music. So although class distinction is clear, the possibilities of class convergence in culture seem equally important to take into account in relation to the kinds of political courtship I have discussed. At the mid-point between structure and agency, where social scientists look for the dynamics of social change, Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* puts considerable emphasis on social and educational conditioning.<sup>61</sup> Habitual ways of life are crucial for the reproduction of the social order. So when Bourdieu speaks about 'relative autonomy' he is, at the same time, stressing regularities between the economic order and the cultural field.<sup>62</sup> Given the effectiveness of soft power perceived by Bourdieu, it follows that he emphasises the importance of academic reflexivity and the need to consider personal experience in research. Although committed to scientific aims, he compares sociology to a martial art that can provide people with a sort of defense system against the perpetuation of inequality.<sup>63</sup>

Sayer (1992) (2005) has much to say in support of Bourdieu's sense of purpose in social science. However, he argues that it is mistake to establish regularities. Where Bourdieu gives a certain impression of stability Sayer stresses the way human society and attitudes are subject to dramatic, if not chaotic, changes. The 'laws' of natural science do not apply.<sup>64</sup> So the goal of social science ought to be the development of critical understanding, and to dispel illusions about these processes without creating a false dichotomy between the subject and object. Given the unpredictable characteristics of world history Sayer, (2005) also argues that Bourdieu's theoretical schema of economic competition and conflict in the cultural sphere is too Hobbesian, and his scientific approach too deterministic.<sup>65</sup> In *The Moral Significance of*

*Class*, Sayer (2005) suggests that one reason classical socialism has been halted, is that it stopped differentiating between internal (moral) and external (social) goods — ‘the good and the bad from the posh and the common’. Attaining or extending the middle-class lifestyle became more important to socialists than the means by which it was achieved.<sup>66</sup> In a general accusation which must touch on Bourdieu’s social capital theory, Sayer suggests that social science has been complicit in this shift; it has tracked class in superficial terms; instead of political capacities it has focused on issues of lifestyle.<sup>67</sup>

In the instance of Forum Theatre cited above, internal goods and external goods seem very much intertwined, at least in published reflections on Forum’s dialogical practices. Clearly artistic and political virtues go hand in hand for a number of people in Forum circles. What is striking in light of Sayer’s point is that Forum-style instrumentalism is discussed separately from the specific goods which stem from workers’ solidarity. Also, in light of Archer’s point about the routine character of structures, it is evident how pertinent issues in trade unions either go unmentioned, or are passed over very lightly or, alternatively, get buried in theory. Yet if this is true of most socially-engaged arts discourses, it seems to be no less true of academic ones. Sayer’s book on class, considers gender and body shape as important variables in the analysis of class and social mobility.<sup>68</sup> Touching on solidarity Sayer reiterates Bourdieu stating that ‘the decline of class solidarity and the absence of mobilisation in no way imply that class is disappearing.’<sup>69</sup> Yet this rather bland theoretical statement belittles important complexities. Concerning solidarity among workers, labour legislation is increasingly injurious for trade unions, collective action is more demanding, unions are more on the defensive, but in growth areas such as air transport, successful strikes still occur.<sup>70</sup>

Important here is that significant critical voices in the arts and academia veil the political complexities of economic confrontation, regardless of the bearing it has on their discussions of power in their own areas of work. Many adults, and their families, encounter the uneven discipline of economic structures, and indeed the limits of dialogue, in educational institutions or through work in the arts. The moment people decide that words, or merely expressive actions, are no longer an effective response to power, is also the point they may make socially important decisions about agency. Often this means gambling energy, time, and resources, on courses of action which will contribute to the development of collective or private structures. People must also adapt if not submit to the spirit of different structures when, for example, they pin their hopes on collective forms of leverage or pursue private

legal actions. These decisions are a significant factor in the reproduction and development of structures such as a trade union movement or a legal system. The most difficult and purposeful struggles within structures also shape the structures.

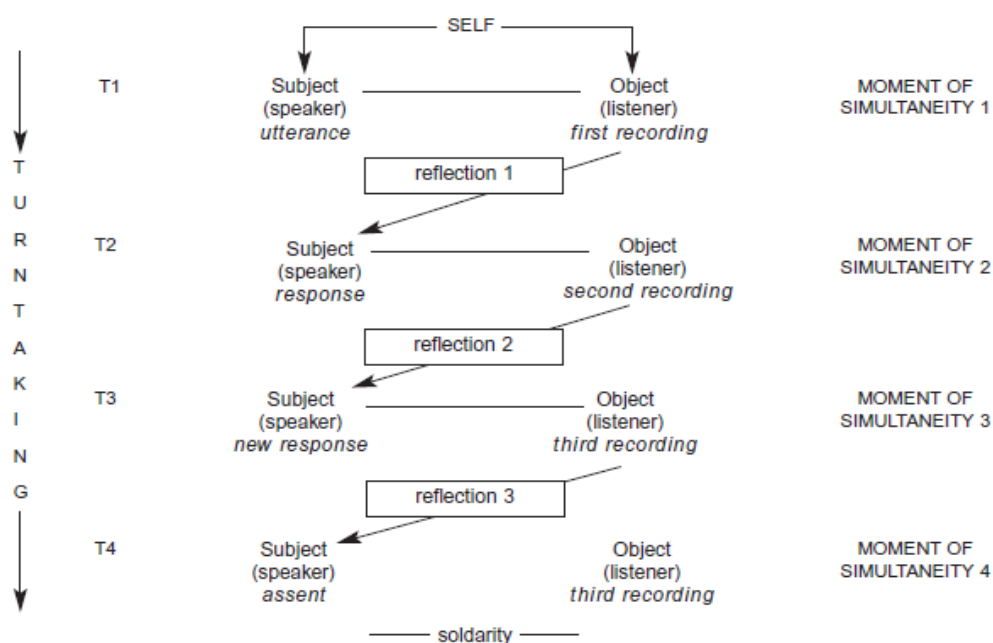
In practice, courses of action are not mutually exclusive; trade unions and social movements may pursue legal cases. But important feelings for structure are also in conflict.<sup>71</sup> The rivalry between trade unionism and the professionalised world of non-governmental organisations, or ‘NGOism’, is particularly marked in “developing countries” and this type of conflict gives different forms of social agency their distinctive spirits. Here it is worth remembering Bourdieu’s skepticism about the professional ethics of his own field. He suggested that neoliberalism turns social scientists into something akin to artists; by which he meant that the production and advancement of critical scholarship is increasingly dependent on a scholar’s private resources, and goodwill towards work. Given the problems of academic trade unionism this thesis needs to take this goodwill into account.<sup>72</sup> This is especially so when the convergence of cultural mores and artistic tastes can veil important divergences when it comes to feelings for structure.

As Sayer (1992) points out the claim that social science might reduce, or dispel illusions, lies in the emancipatory roots of the discipline.<sup>73</sup> However this poses an inherent threat to objectivism because the boundaries of subject and object are crossed. One common solution is to treat people as objects and then report back to them as subjects. In practice, as Sayer argues this usually means publishing and reporting back among power elites; often reinforcing the status-quo and doing more harm than good. Action research and dialogical approach to methodology are preferable he argues, yet he implies that academic research is automatically conducted from a point of relative privilege which needs to be compensated for.<sup>74</sup> This may be true at the level of critical methodology, but as Bourdieu points out academic labour is increasingly subject to the same socio-economic forces operating in the rest of society. Indeed objectivism may encourage a silence about these matters, and the conditions of intellectual labour more generally. Before I discuss the implications for this study I want to return to Margaret Archer’s sociological theory and her criticisms of Bourdieu. In her attempt to clearly distinguish structure and agency Archer differentiates types of reflexivity.

## Feelings for agency

According to Archer, Bourdieu errs too much towards theories of social conditioning and invests too much in academic reflexivity.<sup>75</sup> Archer (2003) (2010) argues that de-industrialisation and globalisation change the way we think about our lives; important transformations in reflexivity are emerging. According to Archer what we care about most in life is distorted by social theorists who, like Bourdieu stress the largely un-reflexive socialisation of structures, and not the individual's sense of agency in society. And because structure and agency have not been sufficiently distinguished, Archer argues that social scientists underestimate our capacities to break with routine actions, and reflexively establish a *modus vivendi*, i.e. a way of living based on the limitation of dissensus, or in other words to act on the basis of agreeing to disagree. Where Bourdieu examines dialogical social relations, Archer focuses instead on 'the dialogical self'. In the following figure she illustrates internal dialogues in which the individual plays the roles of speaker and listener. Archer regards these internal conversations as self-staged mental dramas. [Figure 4.3]

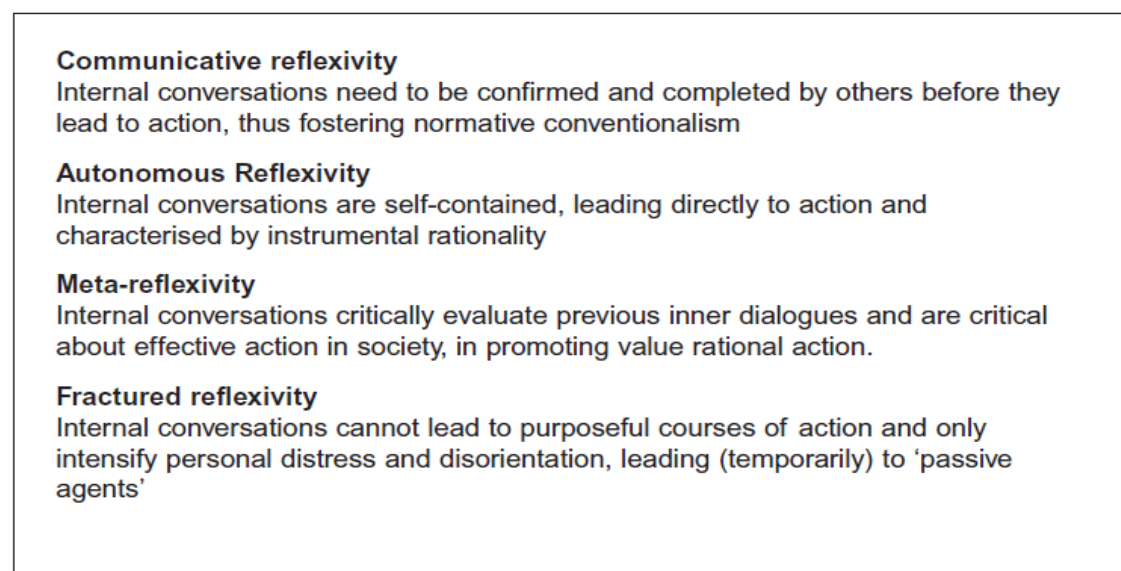
**Figure 4.3** Archer illustrates the four turns of an internal conversation in the diagram below. The individual is both speaker and listener and the dialogue between the two voices allows a reconciliation of different subject/object viewpoints ('solidarity') as part of the self-monitoring and subjective orientation of the individual. (Archer 2003, p.99)



Archer's original research (2003) on internal conversations was conducted in Britain using a sample of twenty interviewees. She argues that the different types of dialogical thought, which she identifies in people's speech, lead us over historical time to take certain actions and

paths in life.<sup>76</sup> According to Archer, the scope and depth of reflexivity is increasing, therefore the important task of sociology is to go beyond theoretical models which portray individuals as something akin to lottery players (e.g. Bourdieu, Beck *et al*), and to understand the way people are instead striving to govern their own lives within certain structural constraints. For Archer, the elasticity Bourdieu allows for in his conceptualisation of the cultural field does not give us an adequate account of the way power is now being rearticulated. She argues that as decisive structures become increasingly transnational in scope, societies are moving away from traditionalism. With this movement routine actions become ineffectual, prompting certain shifts in reflexivity which can be detected through the categories of reflexivity outlined in the next diagram.<sup>77</sup> [Figure 4.4]

**Figure 4.4** Typology of reflexivity. From Archer (2010).



For Archer, the instabilities of globalisation mean that 'what represents the good life has to be answered by everyone', and therefore reflexivity is an imperative if people are not to lose their way in life.<sup>78</sup> Archer (2003) (2010) insists that two categories of reflexivity are on the rise; fractured reflexivity which she associates with a lost sense of direction, and meta-reflexivity which she associates with moral purpose. Although it is not clear how this trend can be measured on the basis of the methods she uses, Archer associates these shifts in reflexivity with social volatility. Because people who are meta-reflexives 'pursue cultural ideals that cannot be accommodated by the current social structure,' they tend to refuse pragmatic or narrowly instrumental reasoning; they are likely to be discontented by institutionalised compromises.<sup>79</sup> She says that contra 'third way' politics, meta-reflexives

‘refuse (...) any notion of trading-off social integration against systemic development, in compromise between justice and efficiency.’<sup>80</sup> This type of reflexivity seems to contain a disavowal of conventional economic-status incentives which attract autonomous reflexives, and the sense of group belonging which is important to communicative reflexives. For Archer (2007) the rise of meta-reflexivity shows that Max Weber’s *wertrationalität* (those whose rationality corresponds to moral demands rather than organisational and technical ones) are alive and well as a subversive counter-cultural force against the rationality of the market and the bureaucratic State.<sup>81</sup> If true, this finding would no doubt please Alasdair MacIntyre to whom Archer refers. The Aristotelian calculation of virtue which MacIntyre favours is clearly comparable to the qualities of meta-reflexivity Archer describes.

When Archer (2010) turns to the notion of collective subjectivity she introduces significant caveats to her analysis. She appears to be uncertain about the dual character of politics which must be constituted both by the beliefs of individuals (agency) and collective power (structure).<sup>82</sup> Any notion of collective or shared reflexivity would touch sharply on the very foundations of her analysis and, as she points out, would also lead to the highly problematic notion of a group mind. Clearly our minds are not like computers interlinked into a single data base.<sup>83</sup> Given the ideas about social conditioning which Bourdieu conveys, Archer also rejects any notion of a ‘reflexive habitus’ as a deeply vacuous concept. Yet, when Archer tackles the closely related question of collective reflexivity her arguments become less and less clear.<sup>84</sup> She says that collective reflexivity would depend on a subtle combination of competition and cooperation. In the formation of a collective identity ‘who I am is what I care about’ becomes ‘who we are is what we care about’.<sup>85</sup> Here Archer admits that a collective concern for internal goods may make ‘us reflexive in a social, instead of a personal way’ and even speculates that her categories of reflexivity could be applied to groups (e.g. communicative reflexivity among families and friends, or autonomous reflexivity in pragmatically seeking the well-being of a group). The most important issue for Archer is still the risk of conflating structure and agency and arriving again at the sort of socially conditioned individuals she sees in Bourdieu’s theory, hence her conclusion; ‘if collective reflexivity exists it is a relational property of people and one that cannot be attributed to the *systemic* level of the social, which lacks the prerequisites of subjectivity, commitment and a capacity to care.’<sup>86</sup> Of course mantras, such as the trade union slogan “an injury to one is an injury to all” seem to refute Archer’s assertion, but failures in practice would also bolster her point.



Ironically, given her critique of Bourdieu, Archer's attempts to classify group reflexivity reveal the rigidity of her analytical schema. When she considers the possible criticism that she 'nudges people into a typology' of reflexivity, her main line of defense is that her research opens up a path to further investigation about modes of reflexivity, their causes, and their distribution. The most important 'missing link', she suggests, is the question of how types of reflexivity relate to collective action.<sup>87</sup> Of course this question goes both ways — one may well ask what collective action might do to reflexivity — so Archer's theory may not have taken sociology much beyond the interdependency of structure and agency that is accepted by most social scientists. Nevertheless, I think Archer is right to be attentive to the difference between (reflexive) individuals and (un-reflexive) structures. The attempt to treat the two similarly, as if systemic structures can be humanised, and attain reflexive attributes, echoes the technocratic interest in producing more system-friendly humans. Among sociologists Archer is one of the most rigorous in resisting the encroachment of such myths of cultural integration into sociological theory. She is also right that we are not prisoners of structure, or habitus, although it is highly debatable whether Bourdieu really intended habitus to be seen as a leg-iron.<sup>88</sup>

### **In synthesis: implications for research**

In Archer's account, shifts in reflexivity affect what people do, and, just as importantly, what they do not do. In their internal conversations the self image of meta-reflexives takes priority over conventional economic rewards and/or group conformity and integration. In this sense Archer problematises reflexivity by pointing out strengths and weaknesses. Therefore she stresses the importance of an individual's *modus vivendi*; the way people deal with structural constraints in their lives. She also points out that what people say in public, and their language or terminology, are important guides to reflexivity in this matter. I return to this point later on.

Because Archer seems to stumble when coming to the terrain of politics and ideology, how forms of reflexivity are put into political practice is almost as mysterious as astrology, and this is a great weakness in her schema.<sup>89</sup> Feelings for structure are submerged by feelings for agency. If, for example, autonomous reflexivity fits with some social groups, what does this mean for unions; are they self-seeking and short-sighted organisations despite the ideological rhetoric of "enlightened self-interest"? Equally it may be asked are the meta-reflexive people

who Archer thinks are produced by globalisation likely to see trade unions as out-dated conformist structures with crude or reductive aims? From Archer's publications cited above, her theory displaces, rather than illuminates, such questions. In order to unite her arguments about the difference of structure and agency with a convincing political analysis this study explores reflexivity on the vertical axis of economic power which Bourdieu describes.

Although he speaks in terms of players and games, Bourdieu's social theory does not reduce people to lottery players as Archer accuses.<sup>90</sup> Aesthetics play an important role for Bourdieu in this respect.<sup>91</sup> What he perceives in the arts is a system of 'losers win' thanks to institutionalised disavowals of normal commerce. The American philosopher and psychologist, William James (1842-1910) associated such artistic traits with saintliness. Although they are secularised and look rather battered, if not defeated by market behavior, the Banksy film mentioned earlier is suggestive of the hopes still invested in artistic virtues as an answer to capitalist economism. Bourdieu tries to get to the socio-economic roots of this moral idealism.<sup>92</sup> He condemns economism for knowing 'no other interest than that which capitalism has produced (...).'<sup>93</sup> Yet he argues economism is only possible because societies set aside mythical sanctuaries from the naked economic self-interest in spheres such as religion, culture, art, and nationalism. According to Bourdieu the only way to analytically escape the 'naiveties of economism (...) is to carry out in full what economism does only partially, and to extend economic calculation to all goods, material and symbolic without distinction (...)'.<sup>94</sup>

Although Bourdieu neglects the role of political capital, his approach is very different from the Anglo-American social capital theory which overlooks capitalism itself.<sup>95</sup> Bourdieu is indebted to Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) whose studies of gift-giving in traditional societies show that honour and un-written commitments are embedded in the logic of giving and receiving. What becomes very evident in Bourdieu's description of the good-faith economy is the formation of social beliefs about virtue that are built up through such gift-giving transactions over generations.<sup>96</sup> In Bourdieu's words a 'heritage of commitments and debts of honour, a capital of rights and duties (...) can be called upon when extra-ordinary situations break in upon daily routine.'<sup>97</sup> Notably this was written before the mass mobilisation of the public by charities and the entertainment industry in response to famines and other human crises, responses that seem to magnify the point. On a more day to day basis, the socio-economic elasticity Bourdieu describes involves localised obligations; a suspicion of

transactions in large markets, and of unbridled market values. At the centre of this belief system in the context of peasant society is a moral emphasis on the non-instrumental care for the land which Bourdieu compares to the European discourse of art-for-art's-sake. Dependent on the collectivisation of belief, the socio-economic meanings of which are rarely articulated in full, the good-faith-economy informs Bourdieu's understanding of European aesthetics. Very importantly, however, Bourdieu does not suggest that European aesthetics might explain the good-faith economy.<sup>98</sup>

The historical characteristics of good-faith economics vary from place to place. However Bourdieu suggests their universality when he argues that economic power is not ultimately derived from wealth itself but rather from systems of symbolic inter-dependency which can be established in the whole socio-economic field. When the wealthy are called on to contribute voluntarily towards the symbolic reproduction of a whole socio-economic order 'the invisible hand of the powerful' is in evidence.<sup>99</sup> As Bourdieu notes the same contributions compare very favourably with the cost of purchasing lasting loyalties with money or goods.<sup>100</sup> Because all this offers a perspective on culture as a whole, Bourdieu never turned his socio-economic ethnography into a simple critique of plutocracy.<sup>101</sup> Bringing his analysis of the good-faith economy out of the context of peasant society, he describes 'the world of art' as an ostentatious sanctuary from the everyday world of self-interested production and finally as 'a denial of all the negations really brought about by the economy.'<sup>102</sup>

Bourdieu's analysis of the good-faith economy provides a critical perspective on Edmund Burke's conservative sense of culture as a political veil of virtuous activity.<sup>103</sup> The methodological question following this line of thought as it is pertinent to the arts is how to grasp the depth of good-faith economics? In light of the above discussions it should be clear now that we must begin with the self-image of individuals if we are to understand more about the social conditioning (the habitus) of reflexivity in the arts. *Virtue* is a word we hardly ever apply directly to ourselves. Nevertheless the autobiographical narrative gave interviewees in this study a framework to explain their sense of ethics by referring to their childhood upbringing; either as an ongoing influence, or as a point of departure, and most often as a mixture of both. Yet the distance between intellectual and personal investments in aesthetic virtues or goods that may be derived from artistic labour, and the lack of the same level of

investment in collective advancement via trade union power needs to be explored further as a matter of the political and cultural imagination.<sup>104</sup> The shaping of this imagination via the arts does not appear to be a simple reflection of the state of politics but possibly an expression of ideas of virtue advanced by the good-faith economy. As Bourdieu argues, virtue is the underlying currency of politics and power can only be accumulated by paying this 'personal price'.<sup>105</sup>

This may partly explain why transactions in the modern good-faith economy often occur between people whose political speech or actions appear opposed. Alliances between ostensible opponents may even be strengthened when people such as Fairley, and Platform group, try to make such transactions more ethically coherent. For the sake of expediency the opposition of socio-economic aims appears to be set aside in a process of political courtship. Not only do the arts offer points of class convergence in matters of taste, but the good-faith economy seems to make 'art' an important object of collective belief. Does this subdue political conflict? In the last chapter I argued that European aesthetic philosophy needs to be understood in the historical context of courtship discourses. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the aims of seduction explicitly included domination and even destruction.<sup>106</sup> At the level of theory, in this chapter I have argued that what is negated by artistic and academic discourses today are important feelings for structure that are vital for the organised working class. There is a growing body of research in Development studies which suggests that the structures of trade unionism and 'NGOism' may sometimes have compatible goals, but their methods and ethics are felt to be in conflict with one another.<sup>107</sup> Although these conflicts are sharply expressed in 'the global south' they are not confined to any region of the world. The sociological and artistic discussions of class and power highlighted above pass over these conflicts; in doing so they assist in the political unmaking of the working class. This does not subdue conflict, but it may be a factor in forcing conflict out of the workplace and into less explicitly economic domains.

### **Discourse analysis with the people in**

There is no such thing as raw data. From the outset research involves selection and interpretation as I discussed earlier. The selection of data is, in itself, a constructive and interpretative act. This is laden with practical difficulties to do with feasibility, and with semi-conscious instincts as well as conscious choices. To address the key questions of this study I have drawn on a broad range of primary and secondary sources including newspaper

and magazine articles, pamphlets, books, diaries, websites, films and radio and TV broadcasts. Closed systems in social science routinely exclude many sources that all have comparative and corroborative importance. In places I refer to extensive studies and statistics which indicate structural conditions. However, much more than Bakhtin, Bourdieu's form of intertextual analysis does not stop with texts; rather texts need to be examined in relation to social structures *and* 'the specific agents' involved in these structures.<sup>108</sup> At the level of methodology this broad approach to discourse analysis puts a premium on dialogical and reflexive capacities. Discourse analysis sometimes appears to be confused with the content analysis (of texts, artworks, publications, etc.) but it is, above all, a means of evaluating underlying social processes. Therefore familiarity or proximity to people directly involved in structuring these processes is a very important asset for discourse analysis.

My criterion for selecting people to speak to throughout this study has been to test some of the key political and governmental claims heard about the arts against the experiences of working in them; which is to say to test the actual experience of discourse. I have worked in and around the arts for over three decades, and I had a prior knowledge about the views of some interviewees (particularly Femi Folorunso and Leigh French) although speaking to these people offered insights on formative experiences that were previously unknown to me. Five of the formal interviews, from more than twenty, were turned into the biographical narratives which form appendices to the main study. All my interviewees had long experience of working at the intersection of art and politics, and most were practiced in the complexities of funding arts projects. The interviewees came from different class and ethnic backgrounds although corroboration, or cross-checking, was more of a concern than the regulation of variety. In general I selected interviewees because of their varied positions at the intersection of art and politics (e.g. a minister of culture; an arts administrator responsible for funding decisions; and the recipients of precarious funding) but more specifically I wanted to cross-check accounts of organisations and practices I discuss. In line with the methodological discussion above when I interviewed people — and indeed throughout this study — I have drawn on my experience of working in the arts. I have spoken at length to many more people than I formally interviewed and the way this general experience overlaps with the present study gives discourse analysis the character of participant observation.

The greatest cross-checking exercise in this study is the comparison made between Britain and Venezuela. What was noticeable about the majority of people I have met in both Britain and Venezuela as a result of their concern with art and politics was that regardless of their origins, their lives and careers tend to correspond with the *habitus* and flexible lifestyle expectations of bourgeois bohemia. I also belong to that same class fraction where people passing in opposite directions on the social ladder meet and form bonds. Contrary to David Brooks' (2000) 'comic-sociology' of upward mobility in the US, which sees 'Bobos' as a hybrid class scaling the ladder to become the new ruling class, I have encountered people who are voluntarily downwardly mobile as well as people who are upwardly mobile but sceptical about material accumulation and conventional rewards. [See Appendix V] Both in Britain and in Venezuela this can also entail a deep scepticism, sometimes even an explicit contempt for trade unionism. When it came to interviewing, I found that the social science idea of the semi-structured interviews fails to prepare the ground for the fully fledged conversations which must arise about class and politics if the foundations of different feelings are to be examined.<sup>109</sup> The next chapter shows this sort of exchange in detail, but it may well be asked at this point what it means to the issues of reflexivity discussed above.

I have drawn on oral history methodology, particularly the consideration given to the benefits, pitfalls and ambiguities involved in sharing interpretative authority with interviewees.<sup>110</sup> This dialogical approach meant that I made informants aware of the general frame of the study at its outset; and particularly my critical sense of the relationship between the arts and politics. To avoid the creation of a false consensus I tried to adopt more than one stance at the same time, testing arguments and exploring practical reasoning as a journalist might do. Although very useful critical discussions can take place by bringing various academic and political perspectives to the fore, there are constraints on the amount of time researchers and informants spend on interviews and informal discussions. A long awaited and unusually brief interview I was granted with the director of Sistema Scotland was formally withdrawn from this study because the organisation objected to the scope of my questions and my 'academic and theoretical approach.'<sup>111</sup> Interviewing presupposes a degree of cooperation from informants. Researchers may strive for ideal speech situations, but organisations may be resistant to critique and therefore cautious about fostering open conversations for research purposes.<sup>112</sup> Clearly an interest in social subjectivity and reflexivity is at the heart of intensive research methods. However these methods can magnify

people's reflexive capacities or open-mindedness, while downplaying the habitual constraints seen by Bourdieu, or the routine actions stressed by Archer; in other words, the limits of dialogue.<sup>113</sup>

As pointed out above, Archer speculates about particular alignments between types of reflexivity and types of group. On the basis of this study there is no reason to believe that different modes of reflexivity cannot be combined in collective action. Moreover, this is surely how it should be; at least if we care about attempts to create democratic organisations. The case of the CFS is an example, and in that instance there is certainly no sense of a mode of reflexivity being shared by a whole organisation. Chapter six discusses the internal debates and arguments in CFS which suggest that the dynamic interaction of different personal characteristics may be essential if collective action from below is to be successful. So as an interlocutor I did not seek to typecast people along the lines of Archer's schema, rather I tried to get to the roots of the reflexive and critical qualities which the arts are supposed to support. This meant exploring reflexivity as part of interviewees' broader accounts of their lives. What often emerges in such biographical accounts is that what people resist, or reject, is at least as important as what they do. Certainly, in this respect, the arts give a space for the development of the kind of moral reflexivity highlighted by MacIntyre and Archer, but interviewees can usually trace this outlook back to earlier non-art experiences; often to do with family life. This is evident in the cross-section of biographical vignettes which I have written up with the help of the interviewees concerned.

Because so much is left out of life stories they are to some extent a handy semi-fictional structure. Yet given the modesty of most interviewees the weakness of the life-story form becomes its strength, because it gives people room to portray ideas of personal virtue. This means we can take seriously the experiences and memories people choose to pick out from their lives as influences on their actions. Written on the bases of sharing interpretative authority with the interviewees, the biographical vignettes which are appendices to my main text represent the relationship between self and society.<sup>114</sup> A doctrinaire positivist in social science would object that these accounts are overly constructed by the interviews on which they are based. However, as data for this study they are important mediations of the

researcher's subjectivity. Otherwise the research would be much more focused on my interpretation of artifacts and artistic events that don't speak back.

Several interviewees pointed towards their intellectual influences and in some cases these are suggestive of how the critique of art is practiced in the arts. In his book *The Drama of Ideas* the literary critic and philosopher Martin Puchner (2010) argues that Plato's critique of art based in Socratic dialogue has been integrated into theatrical theory and the practice of dramatists, such as Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956). Although none of the people I have spoken to in this research would describe themselves as Platonists, it is clear that the critique of art has become an important part of the cultural reasoning of art. Lucy Fairley, the co-founder of Helix Arts, spoke of a patronising approach in community arts; focusing on individual, rather than systemic failures. Fairley thought this approach does 'untold damage' because there is no real attempt shift a balance of power.<sup>115</sup> Indeed such a critical proposition about participation in the arts might be widely accepted. What is much more contested philosophically and politically, are the activities which might change the balance of power. The degree of theoretical abstraction that seems to be called for, and which I have brought into view in this chapter, may encourage others to falsely portray "real" activity in the arts as non-intellectual and non-academic. This is a crude means of disciplining reflexivity. However the problem cannot be addressed by merely promoting artistic or academic reflexivity. As I have tried to argue, the limits of reflexivity in these fields are connected to the distribution of power in society and relate to feelings for structure, and feelings for agency.

Discussions concerning political reasoning, and ethics in the arts, are contingent on the scope of a conversation, and the ability of people to garner mutual trust, often though shared terminology and historical and cultural reference points, all of which may be affected by how, where, and when they meet. All this adds up to a range of immeasurable variables. Moreover there is no need to endorse Friedrich Schiller's aesthetic philosophy discussed in the last chapter, to accept his insights about the playfulness of human interaction. If it were possible to study reflexivity about art in laboratory conditions we would, at best, only be able to track the effect of a scientific habitus. I have not used surveys and questionnaires because they tend to suffer from the same problem. As Bourdieu and Darbel (1991) note museum visitors can



be attracted to answering standardised questionnaires when they are able to choose an answer which states that they came because they love art. More pragmatic answers are less flattering in institutions which are physical manifestations of the reverence for art and culture.<sup>116</sup>

To varying degrees, people working in public or institutionally funded networks depend on well-being claims of one kind or another. Whether it is Britain or Venezuela one can still hear claims about the importance of writers and genres of literature which pay no heed to literacy or libraries; discussions about the role of art in improving public discourse, which pay no heed to the politics of broadcasting; and perhaps most strikingly, discussions of educational failure which are silent about the relative success of egalitarian education in other countries. Issues concerning the ownership and provision of relevant structures are routinely sidelined in the arts, but so is the political complexity of art's belief system and the good-faith economy underpinning it. In this project it soon became apparent that questioning the good-faith in the arts as weapons of social improvement, and suggesting they might actually cause collateral damage was not going to be a particularly popular topic for discussion. However, only rarely could I sense the opportunism of entrepreneurship here. Much more often, it was that people quite understandably think more about the difficulties of their own projects and networks, than they do about the failures or diminishment of other ones; or the overall accountability of what Bourdieu called 'the left hand of the State.'<sup>117</sup> These issues are shown in greater relief in subsequent chapters.

## **Conclusion**

Striving for objectivity and truth is a vital element of research. However, in line with critical realism I have argued that objectivism remains an obstacle to truth about politics. At worst, attempts at merely factual, or empirically neutral description, are fundamentally misleading about power. In the sphere of the arts, what needs to be narrated are human relations, ethics and ideas which are not usually made evident in artistic outcomes; objects, texts, and events. Of particular importance to the main questions of this study of artistic instrumentalism are the characteristics of structure and agency I highlighted. I also pointed out that in both arts and social science literature one could expect greater sensitivity to the distinctive spirits of structures, and to the forces that shape social agency. There is no easy answer to analytical oversights which are probably influenced by the state of politics. However, the way important issues of socio-economic confrontation are passed over, despite their relevance to problems

in the arts, or to education and research, does point to the limits of reflexivity. Although Sayer's (1992) influential study of social science methodology is sensitive and critically nuanced, such a standpoint may end up promoting reflexivity in a rather general sense that tells us little about its effects on power, and the state of politics. The writings cited above by Alasdair MacIntyre in moral philosophy, and by Margaret Archer in sociology, do not tell us much about the state of politics either; but I picked them out because in their different ways they offer a critical analysis of reflexivity. I argued that the combination of these issues calls for a dialogical approach to discourse analysis: discourse analysis with the people in.

The often unexamined basis for publicly funded research is the public interest. Too often the latter is confused with the interests of the government of the day, or the tailored demands of research councils. Identifying and pursuing the public interest in social research is a reflexive problem which involves somehow orientating research *vis a vis* the discourse and values of equality. The values can be diverted or undermined but never ignored. One common diversion in research is the approach whereby human practices are objectified, and it is only when research findings are reported that people are finally treated as dialogical subjects with a range of choices regarding their practices and actions. As Sayer points out, this usually means reporting back to people in power, or people that have been identified as key actors; in the case of a study of artistic instrumentalism the latter group might be as vague as people working in the arts and related fields. The spread of information on the internet does not repair the fundamental fracture because what underpins such research from the outset is the desire to make citizens more legible to political status quo and the State rather than making political power more legible to citizens. If on the other hand equality is to be taken seriously, researchers need to develop intensive pathways that are capable of doing two things: they need to bring a concept of the social whole into view, and they need to make the processes by which inequality is perpetuated more legible to citizens in general. I return to this problem in practical terms in the concluding chapter. The tradition of sociological poetics taken up, and developed in Bourdieu's sociology pursues such egalitarian aims. Frustratingly for some, he pointed out that it is for others to decide whether equality is a morally and socially desirable value.<sup>118</sup> This is an important point in relation to the discourses of art. As I have argued, highly subjective value judgments about practices which *might* produce the reflexive benefits ascribed to art can also cast a veil over key egalitarian issues, and these issues need to be brought out and discussed more rigorously in terms of structure and agency.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Swingewood (1986), pp.10-34. See also Young, R. J.C. (1996), p.10 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Bakhtin spells out the difference he sees between dialogism and dialectics in this way: 'Take dialogue and remove the voices (the partitioning of voices), remove the intonations (emotional and individualizing ones), carve out abstract concepts and judgements from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness — and that's how you get dialectics.' Quoted in Young, R.J.C. (1996), p.55.

<sup>3</sup> Bakhtin adheres to the view that pre-capitalist society allows for the coexistence of separate, largely isolated planes of social existence; capitalism forces these into a contradictory unity. See Bakhtin (1984) pp.19-20.

<sup>4</sup> See Swingewood (1986), p.148

<sup>5</sup> See Swingewood (1986), pp.142-149.

<sup>6</sup> See Hunter (1991).

<sup>7</sup> As Swingewood explains; 'The dialogic principle abhors elitism, privilege: comprehension and meaning are not the sole provinces of cultural intellectuals. What, after all, is the social function and role of the self-consuming criticism associated with much of modern cultural theory? For whom is it meant: With what 'effects' in mind? It is surely not intended for the 'common reader', the educated citizen (...) of modern industrial society.' Swingewood insists that it is 'absurd' to see in 'literature, art and aesthetics an instrument of class domination'. Tony Bennett, Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson are picked out as examples of this overarching critique, heavily influenced Swingewood argues, by Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). See Swingewood (1986) p.150-152.

<sup>8</sup> Eagleton's 2003 book *After Theory*, addresses some of the matters that concerned Swingewood almost three decades earlier. In the same year his book was published Eagleton lost his professorship at Manchester University. In 2016, a report by the Education and Training Foundation found that the academic workforce in Britain had dropped by 9 per cent over a three-year period: the equivalent of 12,000 full-time roles. According to a workload survey by University and College Union, also published in 2016, staff worked an average of two unpaid days per week, and women worked on average 2.4 more full-time equivalent hours per week than men, with women working on average 52.6 hours per week and men working 50.2 hours per week. See <https://www.tes.com/news/further-education/breaking-news/college-staff-work-more-two-days-a-week-free-survey-reveals> (Last Accessed June 2016)

<sup>9</sup> See Swingewood (1986) p.151.

<sup>10</sup> In his short conclusion to *Sociological Poetics and Aesthetic Theory*, Swingewood writes, 'socialist practice and politics may seem a somber affair, evasive and downright dishonest in its compromising posture towards the despised bourgeoisie. (...) but within the field of Theory the revolutionary subject is reaffirmed, as ideology, as practices, as critique. (...) Political criticism replaces political practice.' Ibid. Swingewood goes on: What I am suggesting is that Marxist political practice leads to a distorted communicative practice, the elimination of the dialogical principle. Ibid. p.152.

<sup>11</sup> Young, R. J.C. (1996), p.57.

<sup>12</sup> See *Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary* (1908), available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/37683/37683-h/37683-> (Last accessed September 2016).

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<sup>13</sup> The definition here for capitalism is, 'condition of possessing capital: the economic system which generates and gives power to capitalists'. See *Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary*, (1972), (Edinburgh: Chambers)

<sup>14</sup> *Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dictionary*, 13<sup>th</sup> edition (2014) (Edinburgh:Chambers) available online at <http://www.chambers.co.uk/search.php?query=capitalism+&title=21> (Last accessed September 2016)

<sup>15</sup> See Chang (2011).

<sup>16</sup> Ulrich Beck et al (1994) is one of the key examples Archer (2010) (1995) gives of conflation. Archer (1995) critiques three types of conflation: The elision of agency by structure (downward conflation), e.g. Parsons, T. (1951); the elision of structure by agency (upward conflation), e.g. Habermas, J. (1971); and the horizontal merger of structure and agency (central conflation), e.g. Giddens (1979), Beck et al (1994). For Archer, all three types of conflation lend support to 'the myth of cultural integration.' See Archer (1985), (1995), (1996).

<sup>17</sup> This example of breaking with routine action was when the Mayor of the London Borough of Poplar and twenty-nine Labour councillors went to prison in 1921 for illegally refusing to collect rates. See Leys (1989), p.348.

<sup>18</sup> Hazlitt writes: '[Burke] is the most poetical of our prose writers, and at the same time his prose never degenerates into the mere effeminacy of poetry; for he always aims at over powering rather than at pleasing; and consequently sacrifices beauty and delicacy to force and vividness. He has invariably a task to perform, a positive purpose to execute, an effect to produce. His only object is therefore to strike hard, and in the right place; if he misses his mark, he repeats his blow; and does not care how ungraceful the action, or how clumsy the instrument, provided it brings down his antagonist.' See 'Character of Mr Burke' by William Hazlitt, from *Political Essays*, first published in 1819. Available online at <http://www.blupete.com/Literature/Essays/Hazlitt/Political/Burke.htm#fn> (Last accessed September 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Subsequent chapters discuss this issue in detail, especially in the cases of the Craigmillar Festival Society, and Sistema. Elsewhere I have offered a critical analysis of public research conducted in Scotland on the latter organisation. See 'Hand in Glove: El Sistema and Neoliberal Research', by Owen Logan (2015) available online at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287202150\\_Hand\\_in\\_Glove\\_El\\_Sistema\\_and\\_Neoliberal\\_Research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287202150_Hand_in_Glove_El_Sistema_and_Neoliberal_Research) (Last accessed September 2016).

<sup>20</sup> See Introduction by Wayne C. Booth to Bakhtin, M. (1984) , p. xxvii

<sup>21</sup> Bakhtin argues that literature needs to be understood dialogically as part of a whole culture in a given period and in pursuing this end the Bakhtin circle laid the foundations of a broad discourse analysis which uses a variety of texts, oral accounts, literature, artworks and the mass media to understand social processes and social structuring. See Eagleton (1988), pp. 3-11.

<sup>22</sup> The Rockefeller Commission report on the Humanities states; 'Through the humanities we reflect on the fundamental question: What does it mean to be human? The humanities offer clues but never a complete answer. They reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual, and intellectual sense of a world in which irrationality, despair, loneliness, and death are as conspicuous as birth, friendship, hope, and reason.' See Commission on the Humanities (1980), p.1.

<sup>23</sup> *Exit Through the Gift Shop: A Banksy Film* (2010) Paranoid Pictures.

<sup>24</sup> As A.J.P, Taylor argues, nationalist leaders under Habsburg rule 'fought with intellectual weapons for intellectual prizes. They founded national academies and demanded national universities', and this

was among the factors leading literate peasants to repudiate intellectual values. See Taylor, (1964) pp.33-35. Taylor also points out that Joseph II (1741-1790) of the Habsburg regime was alone among so called 'Enlightened Despots' in protecting peasant entitlements on Habsburg lands, elsewhere 'when peasants were freed from the land, the land was freed from the peasants'. Ibid. p.20. With the fall of Habsburg power at the end of World War I national self-determination became the dominant political idea, now strongly backed by the United States but as Taylor points out, the ethnic-linguistic rivalry of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was merely re-arranged by the new national boundaries which, for the most part, were just as internally diverse and conflict ridden. Ibid. pp. 250-291.

<sup>25</sup> See Burke, [1790] in Muller J.Z. (ed.) (1997), pp. 86-122.

<sup>26</sup> See Young, R.J.C. (1996), p.217.

<sup>27</sup> Theory will always be at issue here as an influence on this. As Young points out, the politics of academic theory are critiqued for creating false, or superficial differences and jargons that distance theory from the world. Ibid. pp. 68. ff.

<sup>28</sup> See chapters by Steve Bell, and Nick Otty, in Babage, F. (ed.) (1995). Forum theatre practices are derived from the dialogical agit-prop theories of the Brazilian writer and director, Augusto Boal (1931-2009). At the roots of this instrumental approach to theatrical practice is the Brechtian desire to break down the barrier between actors and spectators. Early on in his career Boal recognised that it is morally questionable to propose radical courses of action which artists/actors are not themselves willing to pursue in reality. Through a dialogical praxis Forum Theatre aims to empower all the individuals involved to reflexively respond to systematic oppression. These ambitions touch on issues of political virtue which Boal often captures acutely in his reflections on practice. In the parable of the 'political master swimmer' he highlights a rather abstract activism which neglects individual issues and crises unless they are already experienced collectively. See Boal (1995) p. XXI.

<sup>29</sup> Sayer (1992), p.13

<sup>30</sup> See Sayer (1992), on narrative and analysis, pp.261-266.

<sup>31</sup> Sayer (1992), pp.14-17

<sup>32</sup> Tim Ingold (1992) quoted in Hahn (2009), p.132.

<sup>33</sup> Sayer (1992) on narrative versus analysis, p.261 -266.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 265. Sayer finds an example of this rhetoric which, he calls 'fighting talk', in E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* where, in one passage, Thompson gives the impression that workers always find some means to resist exploitation.

<sup>35</sup> From author's email correspondence.

<sup>36</sup> The Lucy Milton Gallery was set up in London in 1971. The economic down turn associated with the oil crisis in 1973 led to its closure. Through the support she sourced from British Steel for an arts projects, and her other partnership work, Milton (as Fairley was then named), was able to convince the Arts Council to invest in the creation of the Artists Agency. She says she became 'politicised' during the 1984-1985 miner's strike, when she saw aggressive police tactics and the distortion of events in news reporting. From author's interview with Fairley (18 October 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Fairley negotiated a £10,000 grant from Shell to an environmental group in Quaking Houses, County Durham. The acceptance of this grant led her to collaborate with Platform in London and to their report concerning the ethical funding; "Funding for a change project". See 'For Lucy Fairley,

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co-founder of Helix Arts and Crossings', <http://platformlondon.org/2016/09/30/for-lucy-fairley/>, (Last accessed September 2016). Platform, receives funding from various private agencies and has continued to develop discussion on these matters. See <http://platformlondon.org/about-us/funders-ethics/ethical-fundraising-policy/> (Last accessed September 2016). Platform points out that there is no such thing as 'clean money' and indeed their donors have included controversial figures such as Anita Roddick (1942-2007) founder of The Body Shop company, which is criticised in detail by Greenpeace; both for 'greenwashing' and for its anti-trade union practices. See *What's Wrong with The Body Shop*, [http://www.mcspotlight.org/beyond/companies/bs\\_ref.html#33](http://www.mcspotlight.org/beyond/companies/bs_ref.html#33) (Last accessed September 2016).

<sup>38</sup> From author's interview with Fairley (18 October 2011).

<sup>39</sup> See Sayer (1992), pp. 250-257. To Sayer's discussion about the desirability of historical interpretation it may also be argued that a social science which attempted to stand aside from its own history would actually lose many, if not all, its most important claims to validity.

<sup>40</sup> See Gombrich (1966), p.5. In a 1968 article 'Components of a National Culture', the New Left historian Perry Anderson argues that it is no accident that E.H. Gombrich's (1909-2001) widely praised study, first published in 1950, avoids the issue of history in its title and content. According to Anderson *le cause e radici delle manieri*, in other words the underlying reasons for changes in style that were the foundational question of art history going back to Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), actually amount to an unanswerable puzzle for Gombrich. Others in the group of liberal refugees from fascism that Anderson examines is Gombrich's friend Karl Popper, (1902-1994) the philosopher of science and author of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) and *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957). Both men were fiercely anti-Hegelian in their methodological individualism (reducing society to the study of individuals) and in the refutation of the idea that history carries a meaning which demands interpretation. See Anderson (1968).

<sup>41</sup> At the level of methodology Norbert Elias (1897-1990) argues that interdisciplinary work can actually harden disciplinary boundaries unless it creates a deep synthesis. The argument informs the approach I have taken in sociological poetics. According to Elias, (2000) a sociology that is open to history and a history that is open to sociology involves this deep synthesis rather than a mere transposition of objects or methods. See Andrew Linklater, 29 May 2012, 'Norbert Elias, Process Sociology and International Relations', in *e-international relations*, online at <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/05/29/norbert-elias-process-sociology-and-international-relations/> (Last accessed January 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Sayer argues that because extensive studies examine large scale regularities, they have limited explanatory power. The argument is that mere scale does not sufficiently reveal causal processes and therefore findings are unlikely to be generalisable; although this is a characteristic intention of extensive studies. See Sayer (1992), pp. 241-257.

<sup>43</sup> For an example of the difficulties in retaining the semiotic markers of 'art' see the discussion between Pierre Bourdieu and Hans Haacke comparing the esoteric languages of social science and art. Bourdieu and Haacke (1995), pp.105-112.

<sup>44</sup> The archaeological analogy I use here is one that comes from interdisciplinary work with the anthropologist, John Andrew McNeish, on the socio-economics of oil and gas. Although there are important differences between the sites of social research, and physical sites in archaeology, the need to make incisions in order to explore a wider field of data, and to understand its construction helps to highlight the way knowledge is itself constructed on the basis of a tangible reality. The analogy accords with the realist understanding of social science; namely that the world exists independent of our interpretation of it.

<sup>45</sup> Sayer (1992), pp.246-257.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.246.

<sup>47</sup> For a critical study of the process which ended with the Craigmillar Festival Society being accused of mismanagement of funds, and closing down, see Kallin, H. & Slater, T. (2014).

<sup>48</sup> Creative Scotland had questioned the financial viability of printing Variant as a free-sheet publication, and suggested that the online publication alone would be a solution to the organisation's financial difficulties.

<sup>49</sup> During the course of this research Helix increasingly stressed the arts as a source of motivation; transforming people's lives and giving them new opportunities. In 2016 the main reason for Helix's activities is described this way on the organisation's website: 'Why we do it. Our participants say their confidence, motivation and skills are boosted. Fresh opportunities for employability are opened up and many move into education and training. Health and well-being improve. Participants see themselves differently during and after a high quality Helix Arts programme. Co-produced events, performances and exhibitions give audiences the opportunity to see participants in a very different light too. Helix Arts programmes transform the lives and spirits of artists, participants and audiences'. See, <https://www.helixarts.com/about/> (Last accessed September 2016).

<sup>50</sup> Throughout the period of my research, the governments of the UK and Venezuela were at the opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of political beliefs about the role of the State. Looking at comparable organisations in such different political contexts is not so much a means to find regularities (although I do identify some concerning art and education and ideas of agency) it is more a means to separate the layers of meaning and action compacted by the Western aesthetic lexicon. In its much repeated foundational narrative, the Craigmillar Festival Society was born as a critical response to a refusal on the part of the local school to provide music lessons. Notwithstanding the more complex factors discussed in chapter six, this response is very different in character from El Sistema youth orchestras, but both are responses to shortcomings in education systems.

<sup>51</sup> Yudice (2003), p.154 ff.

<sup>52</sup> Yudice (2003), p.157.

<sup>53</sup> Leigh French, see Appendix III.

<sup>54</sup> 'Between rhetoric & reality', by Susan Fitzpatrick, (Variant, Winter, 2009) is an example of Bakhtin's dialogical critique brought to bear on some of the key points of Variant's engagement with the 'cultural' political economy. See <http://www.variant.org.uk/pdfs/issue36/rhetreal.pdf> (Last accessed September 2016).

<sup>55</sup> Art historiographers Michael Orwicz and Claire Beauchamps (1985) explore the reception of Arnold Hauser's volumes on *The Social History of Art* on the political left and right during the Cold War. They highlight what was felt to be at stake in Hauser's writing about art and society. In the eyes of the influential liberal art historian, E.H. Gombrich, (1909-2001) Hauser made artists seem subservient to historical and economic forces. They point out that Gombrich saw the theoretical equivalent of Soviet communism here. If artists were so subservient, or dependent, why not replace capitalist market influences with the power of governments; and communist parties in particular? In other words Hauser's methods and findings logically implied an unwelcome policy. Hauser's social history was more welcome on the left (at least until the 1980s and rise of cultural studies which made his examples of art appear too conservative, see Harris, 2005, p. xi.). However, Hauser did provide a greater understanding of changing aesthetic aims, and given the left's division over Stalinism, the way he was seen (by the left) to keep the artistic process at an arm's length from political economy helped

to support the recognition (an especially important one for those who believed in aesthetic autonomy) that change and radical innovation in art could co-exist with conservatism. Orwicz and Beauchamps think that what was left largely intact by both the left and right versions of art's social history was *the work of art* as the object of art history. This, they argue, pays scant regard to the ways that art works are connected, functionally and ideologically, to the concerns of other disciplines and other histories. Dignified by claims to empirical rigour the art work may instead be analysed 'as the principle site and source of its own meaning.' See Orwicz and Beauchamps (1985) pp.58-59.

<sup>56</sup> Of course in many instances networks develop with the express purpose of making links to people favourably positioned in key institutions and organisations.

<sup>57</sup> It should be noted that the subheading here does not refer to Raymond Williams's concept of 'structures of feeling' which, arguably, conflates the issues of structure and agency discussed in this chapter.

<sup>58</sup> See Bourdieu (2000) [1984], p.9.

<sup>59</sup> See Randal Johnson (ed.), in Bourdieu (1993), p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Bourdieu refutes traditional structuralist theory which sees in expressive culture the *reflection* of the social stratification of society; and therefore treats artists as the unconscious spokespeople or ideologists of groups and classes as if economic power and political authority go unquestioned. See Randal Johnson (ed.), in Bourdieu (1993), p.13 ff.

<sup>61</sup> Bourdieu (1977), p.167.

<sup>62</sup> Bourdieu was sympathetic to Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) theorisation of social control. As with Foucault, power is highly diffused in Bourdieu's view and it is only because of this sense of diffusion that art may be seen to mediate power, on the one hand, and that the arts are also so effective in legitimating social differences and reproducing structural inequalities on the other. Like Foucault's theory of governmentality, which describes the systemic internalisation of power, even when the source of authority is absent, Bourdieu envisages collectively orchestrated and regularised actions going on 'without the orchestrating action of a conductor.' See Bourdieu (1977), p.72.

<sup>63</sup> See Bourdieu's discussions and defense of his general approach in *La Sociologie est un sport de combat*, produced by Véronique Frégosi and Annie Gonzalez (2002), C-F Films and VF Productions. Available online at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9PCp9oKPRw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9PCp9oKPRw) (Last accessed September 2016).

<sup>64</sup> Sayer (1992), p.253.

<sup>65</sup> Sayer (2005), p.81.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p.111 & pp.137-138.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. p.225.

<sup>68</sup> It is suggested that gendered bodies are a specific forms of physical capital See Sayer (2005) p.83.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p.80.



<sup>70</sup> See for example, 'Strikes in the U.S. Airline Industry 1919-2004', by David J. Walsh, in Brenner, Day, and Ness (eds.) (2015), p.583.

<sup>71</sup> An example of the difficulties here is when a trade union pursues a costly legal action on behalf of a member who settles privately "out of court", thereby depriving the union of a public ruling. On the other hand legal costs can make unions timid from a legal point of view, thus allowing employers considerable room for abuse. A particularly tragic example of the different political ethics here is the split among the "mothers of the disappeared" in Argentina. In this case two organisations emerged representing mothers of people murdered by the military dictatorship of the 1970s. One organisation refused to pursue individual cases through the courts on the grounds that such cases could not compensate for the genocidal attack on all critics of the dictatorship. Mercedes Mereno, a prominent member of this group, argued that the political scale of the crimes committed by Argentina's government against their citizens demanded the political reordering of society; and that individual legal cases and the associated journalism created a public discourse concerning worthy innocent victims, versus other victims whose political activities implied that they somehow deserved their fate. (From author's interviews in Buenos Aires, September, 2006) See also Bouvard, M.G. (1994).

<sup>72</sup> For discussion of the difficulties of drawing trade union and NGO politics closer together see, 'A Country Without a State? Governmentality, Knowledge and Labour in Nigeria', by Femi Folorunso, Philippa Hall and Owen Logan, in McNeish & Logan (2012).

<sup>73</sup> Sayer (1992) pp.254-257.

<sup>74</sup> Here Sayer posits 'A Workers Enquiry into the Motor Industry', published in 1977, as an example of a research project which 'softened' the boundaries of intellectual and subaltern divisions of labour, which he says could not be removed. See Sayer (1992), p.255. Sayer does not say why these boundaries could not be removed. One way would be to compare and contrast the issue of 'workers' control' (this was what prompted the report) with the organisation of academic labour in universities.

<sup>75</sup> See Archer (2010), p.5.

<sup>76</sup> Carrying forward her critique of the conflation of structure and agency Archer proposes 'analytical dualism' as a temporal approach to the issue of structure and agency at the heart of contemporary social theory. Analytical dualism regards agency in a dynamic relationship with habitual thinking. See Archer (2003) p.71 ff. In examining this relationship Archer argues that it is possible to discern in the public language of individuals transformations in their private reflexivity, and these transformations she argues are effectively being imposed by a precarious economic system that demands increased levels of competition and labour flexibility on the one hand, and diminished social security on the other.

<sup>77</sup> Archer says that in the developed areas of the world 'individual life-worlds are no longer amenable to orchestration by 'habitus', but neither is public life at the capricious mercy of individualised serial self-reinvention', Archer (2010), p.9. She refers here to 'autonomous reflexivity' a rather selfish sounding stance towards society in her schema. Such goal orientated individualists are still a strong force she argues. Typically they appear to have little loyalty to their social backgrounds and the internal deliberations driving their *modus vivendi* are limited in philosophical scope, although by no means naive or short sighted, since personal transformation for the autonomous reflexive is connected to a strategic understanding of the workings of society. See Archer (2003) p.253. Archer associates autonomous reflexivity with upward mobility and indeed it looks very different to the communicative reflexivity she associates with social immobility. Individuals belonging to the latter category re-endorse their life projects in relation to their backgrounds and in relation to social groups to which they feel a sense of belonging. Archer's communicative reflexive is likely to be a dependable friend

and to be more gregarious, but also to belong to an endangered species. Globalisation is eroding the very social relations they value most, namely those in which people's behaviour and general demeanour matter much more than their ideas or achievements. When she comes to political analysis Archer thinks the pressure on communicative reflexivity may be a good thing because those who practice it are fundamentally apolitical — in her words they concentrate on 'carving out a micro-life world, whose intrinsic satisfactions [they believe] outweigh any difference that extrinsic macro-political intervention could make to them', Archer (2003) p.184. The last category, fractured reflexivity, impedes people from forging a practical *modus vivendi*. However, Archer says this does not mean that fractured reflexives cannot overcome the problems and develop a useful form of reflexivity.

<sup>78</sup> Archer (2010), p.9.

<sup>79</sup> Archer (2003), p.361.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p.360.

<sup>81</sup> Archer (2007), p.43.

<sup>82</sup> Although Archer admits the possibility of collective reflexivity, she avoids considering how these relations might be articulated; in other words what other writers might examine under the terms of ideology or hegemony. While structures of society lack the important subjective attributes of individuals, as Archer correctly argues, even Western style consumerist society can be seen as a social formation based on an ideological dialectic between objectively existing structures (physical modes of production and regimes of law) and subjective desires and cares (in the development of consumption). Moreover these notions of systemic continuity between individual subjectivities and objectively existing structures are at the centre of history. In Europe after the belief that the care of the soul depends on the church (as opposed to more direct relationships with god brought about by the Protestant reformation) we come to other ideas of systemic continuity; such as the free market is right because it most accurately reflects human nature; or that the strength of the liberal democracy is that it reflects both human competition and human cooperation. Another example of the recurring search for systemic continuity between structure and agency is the Islamic Republic of Iran. Ultimately Iran is ruled by the Guardian Council, a junta made up of a small politicised section of the clergy who have eschewed simple theocracy and attempted to interpret God's will in the Peoples' will. In this way the revolutionary clergy identified the public feelings of anti-Americanism that they turned into a movement strong enough to conquer internal and international structural constraints. See Mahdavi (2008), pp.142-160.

<sup>83</sup> It is worth noting here the comparable idea that structures might gain the reflexive properties of individuals. I discuss this obsession in systems theory in chapter six.

<sup>84</sup> Archer considers the possibility of collective reflexivity in the following way: 'If collective reflexivity exists, it derives from the relationality of Ego and Alter, and their subjective acknowledgement — under their own descriptions — that it has a worth surpassing both of them. In other words, their relationship has emergent properties and powers that generate 'internal goods' (love, friendship, devotion, caring) that cannot be produced by aggregation and are also deemed highly worthwhile in themselves. (...) the members of a close family or friendship group, work team or superlative orchestra recognize the preciousness of what they have generated together, (...) This recognition means respect, even reverence, for the relational goods generated and concern for the preservation, [and] propagation of this worth, which means commitment to fostering the relationship itself.' See Archer (2010), p.10.

<sup>85</sup> Archer (2010), pp.10-11.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p.11.

<sup>87</sup> Archer (2003), p.166.

<sup>88</sup> In a useful article on 'The Cognitive Origins of Bourdieu's Habitus', the sociologist Omar Lizardo (2004) argues for the importance of Bourdieu's borrowings from the Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980). In the stages of children's development Piaget saw a constant relation between structuring of knowledge and the structuring of the external world. Lizardo explains how this dynamic process of assimilation also accounts for the ambiguity of Bourdieu's concept of habitus as almost objectively existing social structures. Thus, Lizardo argues, we ought to be sensitive to Bourdieu's dual sense of habitus as the *mental* structuring of *physical* lived experience, the latter being embodied in tasks, rituals, design and in the uses of spaces etc. See Lizardo (2004), pp. 375–401.

<sup>89</sup> See Archer (2003), p. 209.

<sup>90</sup> For example, Bourdieu (1977) examines systems of class, status and honour; if the latter was reducible or comparable (for Bourdieu) to the mentality of a game player, his analysis would be much more concerned with rule breaking. He does not overlook this, but it is not a key concern.

<sup>91</sup> Echoing the theory of complex normativity discussed in the previous chapter Bourdieu sees artistic virtues being expressed in the rejection of commercial culture. This can mean that the goals that dominate life in the rest of society are overturned. Yet in a system of 'losers win' people who have a 'feel for the game' in the cultural field gain kudos, or in Bourdieu's terms they acquire symbolic capital which may in certain circumstances be turned into real capital, e.g. grants, awards, prizes and other forms of support and patronage from State and private sources. Randal Johnson writes that Bourdieu sometimes attributes a 'feel for the game' to habitus because people are inclined towards actions and reactions that are not always calculated and they are not *consciously* obeying rules. Rather certain norms are the result of long developmental processes that result in 'structuring structures' - the operations of which become second sense. See Bourdieu (1993) p.16 ff.

<sup>92</sup> See James (1977), pp.356-357.

<sup>93</sup> Bourdieu (1977), p.177.

<sup>94</sup> Bourdieu (1977), pp.177-178.

<sup>95</sup> The most influential American theorist of social capital is Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone* (2000) which takes its title from the increased numbers of bowlers in the United States, compared to the decreased number of bowling leagues. In examining this kind of atomisation, and particularly the dilemma of cohesion versus diversity in the formation of social ties, Putnam offers up a theory of 'bridging capital', as a balance to what he calls 'bonding capital'. Bridging capital, so the argument goes, is created when we create reciprocal relations with people who we are not bonded to in terms of age, ethnicity, class, religion and so on. However, as Putnam concedes in the conclusion of his later co-authored book, *Better Together, Restoring the American Community*, 'social capitalists cannot shun conflict' and having an enemy of some kind, (such as drunken drivers) can be vital for the creation of social relations. See Putnam R. et al (2004) p.285. Overall Putnam's view of community building is a rose-tinted one which offers very few insights into social change and political conflict. Putnam's engagement with labour politics is remarkably thin for someone interested in 'connective strategies.' The small victories derived by his social capitalists come at no political or financial cost to the rich, and in Putnam's purview an exemplary trade union works in partnership with employers; one of the most contentious issues in labour circles today.

<sup>96</sup> See Bourdieu (1977), p.172 ff.

<sup>97</sup> Bourdieu, (1977), p.178.

<sup>98</sup> In *Distinction* Bourdieu (2000) avoids the trap of Eurocentrism by turning to European aesthetics in a postscript chapter, entitled “Towards a ‘Vulgar’ Critique of ‘Pure’ Critiques.” He criticises the European cultural elites who equate artistic freedom with a natural mastery of the world and the ‘mercenary’ arts of the masses with social servility. He argues that the European discourse of aesthetics inflated the cultural accomplishments of the intelligentsia and neglected their complicated structuring — which is to say the social reasons people have certain tastes, perform certain functions and present certain arguments which function to reproduce structural inequality.

<sup>99</sup> Bourdieu (2003), p.26.

<sup>100</sup> See Bourdieu (1977), p.184 ff.

<sup>101</sup> Of course one can go further here because it is through these increasingly internationalised processes that values are formed which are necessary for collective belief not just in specific political relations (e.g. dictatorship, patrimonialism, socialism, liberalism) but in the existing variety of State systems existing in the world at any one point in time. If so this is anything but a post-hegemonic order as posited by the cultural studies writers such as Lash and Lury (2007) in their book *Global Culture Industry*. Lash and Lury conjure with the idea of art as a thing in itself and an ‘ideological apparatus’ in its own right. Their critique which examines ‘art as life’ in the quasi-autonomous economic sphere of the art market does not really locate its role in any wider political economy. See Lash and Lury (2007), p.84.

<sup>102</sup> Bourdieu (1977), p.197.

<sup>103</sup> See Burke, [1790] in Muller J.Z. (ed.) (1997) pp. 86-89.

<sup>104</sup> A remarkable exception — unusual even for its time — is the 1973 UK hit, ‘Part of the Union’ by the English rock band The Strawbs. Instead of the more usual expression of left-leaning pathos for the underdog, or right-leaning condemnation of political short-sightedness among the working class, this song exhibits a defiant confidence in trade union power.

<sup>105</sup> See Bourdieu (1977), p.194.

<sup>106</sup> *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, (1782) by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos (1741- 1803), is one of the most well known stories of seduction carried out with the intention of destroying a woman’s reputation and honour.

<sup>107</sup> Examples of the growing body of literature concerning NGOs, Opoku-Mensah, P., Lewis, D. and Tvedt, T. (eds) (2007); Choudry, A. & Kapoor D. (2013); Hilton, M., McKay, J., Crowson, N. and Mouhot, J.F. (2013).

<sup>108</sup> See Randal Johnson in Bourdieu (1993) p.17.

<sup>109</sup> Tim May states that ‘the semi-structured interview represents an opening up of the interview method to an understanding of how interviewees generate and deploy meaning in social life’. See May (2001) pp.135-136. However this ‘opening’ usually happens in the ‘social-life’ created by interview situations. For this reason attempts within social science to regulate the real dynamics of conversation, even at the level of so-called ‘open ended’ interviews which are supposed to allow for qualitative insights into individual subjectivity, often look like attempts to limit the inter-subjective dynamics of everyday life even when this is the real object of reflexive research.

<sup>110</sup> See Borland (2006).

<sup>111</sup> George Anderson, Communications Manager of Sistema Scotland, also objected that my research 'approach is academic and theoretical while we are working in a real community with real children.' From email withdrawing interview with Nicola Killeen, 22 February, 2013.

<sup>112</sup> Drawing from feminist methodology Tim May makes the point 'experiences of those researched should not be separated from the researchers. An exchange based on consultation and participation should take place in which each learns from the other', see May (2001), p.26. Such an ideal is based on a profoundly democratic scholarly ethos. Nonetheless, this may obscure an important political problem which is that such ideal speech situations presuppose a correspondingly democratic field of research, if not a fully functioning democratic polity.

<sup>113</sup> It is worth noting here that there is very little sense of how Archer has influenced her public accounts of private reflexivity. See Archer (2003), p.52. Indeed she might even be accused of being rather un-reflexive about her attempts to create scientific categories out of people's subjective position taking and the general messiness of life. Bourdieu may be accused of a similar scientific objectification in so far as the subjectivity of the sociologist is usually much less in evidence in his writings than it is in *Sketch for a Self Analysis* where Bourdieu (2007) brings his formative experiences face to face with the conception of scientific objectivity. As I argue above any solution to this problem must involve greater political transparency. Bourdieu's sense of social science as a form of combat should not be anticipated as painless or trouble-free.

<sup>114</sup> From Bourdieu's perspective on the cultural field the private life of the mind does not look so private. Archer's studies suggest this too, because our innermost thoughts are connected to our public conduct, and the conduct of others. Hence the significance of what we are willing to say in public.

<sup>115</sup> From author's interview with Fairley, op. cit.

<sup>116</sup> See Bourdieu and Darbel (1991), p.108.

<sup>117</sup> See Bourdieu (2000). p.1.

<sup>118</sup> See *La Sociologie est un sport de combat*, produced by Véronique Frégosi and Annie Gonzalez (2002), C-F Films and VF Productions. Available online at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9PCp9oKPRw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9PCp9oKPRw) (Last accessed September 2016).

## Chapter 5

### The Good Life Gone Wrong

#### Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the importance of the reflexive aspects of human agency, especially in the sociology of Margaret Archer and the philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre. Such discussions of agency have a slender part in studies of cultural policy. In his book *Culture & Democracy* Clive Barnett (2003) considers the variation between Foucauldian theoretical perspectives which emphasise the dominating power of institutional structures, versus Habermasian ones that emphasise the potential for human spontaneity. Michael Foucault's (1926-1984) influential critique of 'biopolitics' stems from his genealogical account of the discourses of modern governmentality which he sees structuring everyday life and work to the point of obliterating true individuality.<sup>1</sup> Jurgen Habermas instead directs our attention to the dialectics of 'speech acts'.<sup>2</sup> Although they are strongly regulated, speech acts underpin Habermas's hopes for genuine democracy. Both these avenues of critique form major arteries in the general research field of culture and democracy, yet it is anything but obvious where they lead and who, in reality are the main beneficiaries of the oxygen of these anti-hegemonic perspectives. Barnett proposes that 'what is needed is an account of how free and autonomous actors are formed and maintained.'<sup>3</sup>

This chapter recounts an open-ended conversation which touches on political and institutional relationships which ideologically influence speech acts. However, as the social historian E.P. Thompson argued, social experience is always in tension with ideology.<sup>4</sup> The truth of Thompson's statement is clear from Toby Lowe's recollections of the frustrations of his career which takes us through some key institutions of post-industrial regeneration in Britain. His frustrations led eventually to his decision to work in the arts. Before turning to Lowe's story I trace the historical background of some of the dilemmas he brings to the fore concerning 'quality' in the participatory arts.

#### Culture and Transvaluation

The fate of realism in cultural production would suggest that areas of life and work where people enjoy freedom of expression and some degree of critical independence are sites of social privilege. Such arenas may support 'the critical voice' in society in the sense that Amartya Sen (1999) and others discuss the importance of people's capacities to question the

social and political order. However the institutions and practices which produce or sustain these critical voices have to be measured against a politics of scale which takes account of the relative strengths of social movements, socio-economic forces and geopolitical powers.

The impact of these structural forces can be seen in 20<sup>th</sup> century photography; especially in the transition from an internationalist movement for working class self-representation, in the interwar period, to networks and professional agencies which sought out a much narrower form of autonomy for freelance photographers during the Cold War. The overall result of this shift was a repetition of the transvaluation of realism seen in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Linda Nochlin (1990) argues this was when the qualities associated with realism first began ‘to acquire different or opposite meanings.’ Values of truth and honesty, that were the keys to the political aesthetics of the 1850s when realism had been regarded as ‘democracy in art’, by the 1880s had turned into an exclusivist politics of style revolving around formal ideas such as ‘flatness in art’ intended to counter ostentatious qualities of illusion in painting.<sup>5</sup> Nochlin suggests the politics of realist representation were translated into new hierarchical social distinctions, seen for example in the submersion of any sense of aristocratic flamboyance and the turn to the sort of effete aesthetic restraint associated with Dandyism. As a result, form began to take precedence over narrative complexity and the development of mass production.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century photography a very similar turn-around occurred. The movement of worker-photographers, responsible for pioneering a caustic realism in photo-essays in the 1920s and 1930s, aimed for what we might today call media citizenship. Moreover they were of course struggling for a redistribution of power and wealth in the world. At that time it was reasoned in the workers’ movement that realism was articulated by photographs and words in a sequence, so that different social phenomena could be seen in critical connection with one another.<sup>6</sup> This rationale implied and depended on page space in the journals of the workers’ movement or in sympathetic publications. In such socialist photo-essays the *other* was not the native, the peasant or the worker but the ruling classes and their instruments of State. The targets of the sardonic pictorial and textual juxtapositions in these photo-essays and photo-montages were the systemic contradictions of capitalist system. However the realism born from these anti-capitalist ambitions was turned into an altogether more limited project with fairly conventional professional and artistic ambitions. This was carried out by photographers in the post-war period some of whom had been part of the left in the 1930s like Henri Cartier Bresson (1908-2004). In contrast to the analytical tasks of worker photo essays, left-leaning photography during the Cold War increasingly adopted the virtuoso idea of ‘the decisive

moment', an optimum visual arrangement to be captured in single photographs. This saleable rationale — as gradually reflected in larger pictures, fewer words and less investigative analysis — was first offered by Cartier Bresson (1908-2004) as the title for his influential 1952 book of peripatetic photography. Although he drew from the reservoirs of left-wing culture Cartier Bresson argued that a single shot could show 'the precise organisation of forms' (...) [and give an event] 'its proper expression'.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of the decisive moment, as the critic Derrik Price sees it, meant that 'the endeavour to make great statements gave way to the recording of little, dislocated moments which merely insinuated that some greater meaning might be at stake.'<sup>8</sup> It is certainly true that a generation of photographers who followed in Cartier Bresson's footsteps set out a highly technocratic and depoliticising rationale for reportage.<sup>9</sup> In turning structural critique into critical ambiguity, no single group succeeded more than the Magnum co-operative, founded in 1947 by Cartier Bresson and his colleagues in the penthouse restaurant of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. With a handful of notable exceptions such as Philip Jones Griffiths (1936-2008) whose photo-essays hinged on critical text-image sequences, Magnum's growing cohort of photographers put structural issues such as editorial politics and the control of the media to one side in pursuit of a particular niche market; the recurrent pathos of liberal humanism was sold as gritty realism in reportage and documentary-style photographs.<sup>10</sup> The end result in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was that the art of the *flâneur* was most convincingly restored by the globe-trotting photographer who brought the world to the breakfast table. For Michael Ignatieff (2000) the world had been made transparent by the activities of these photographers who explored 'the fine line that separates detachment from voyeurism'.<sup>11</sup> Only someone with an unfashionable interest in what Ignatieff called 'the dead hand of Left aesthetics' would wonder why the role of the ruling class was increasingly invisible in 'the social landscape' created by photographers, picture editors and publishers from the 1950s onwards.<sup>12</sup>

### **Tragedy and Farce**

These brief observations concerning the history of realism are suggestive of the structuring of political ethics and aesthetics. What is to be explored in more detail in this chapter is the structuring of similar representations of Britain's supposedly post-industrial society. The first thing that must be said is that Britain's politically fraught transition to a new service industry economy, anchored in finance, insurance and real estate, (the FIRE sector), was largely dependent on the cushioning effect of revenues derived from the North Sea oil industry in the



1980s.<sup>13</sup> Therefore the very idea of post-industrialism should be recognised as an ideologically slanted account of socio-economic change in Britain. One of its greatest ironies – one that might remind us of Karl Marx’s aphorism about history repeating itself first as tragedy and then as farce – goes as follows: Once realism was reconstituted in the liberal humanist terms promoted by organisations like Magnum, there was a proliferation of neo-naturalist styles in the West. These were incapable of addressing capitalism with either the wit or purpose of the workers’ movement. Then, in the so-called post-industrial epoch these politically gutted off-shoots of realism were (now quite farcically) proffered back to a disenfranchised working class as an aesthetic means of cultural participation. This act of courtship happened in a vast number of arts and inclusion programmes which in Foucauldian terms, turn the surveyed into self-surveyors.<sup>14</sup>

The great irony of the culture of Anglo-American de-industrialisation is that over the same period successful cultural entrepreneurs, such as the Oscar winning US filmmaker Michael Moore, attempted to resuscitate the cultural consciousness of an organised militant proletariat in its own absence. It is not only that the bargaining power on the side of labour has been dramatically eroded by the asymmetric competition of globalisation but the ideologically compromised character of US trade unionism is repeatedly swept aside in Moore’s *oeuvre*. So unfortunately many of the underlying problems of articulating workers’ solidarity in the new geopolitical order are passed over. As in a farce, just as the economic power of the working class disappears from stage left, its political consciousness appears vaingloriously from stage right – from the multimillion dollar entertainment industry.<sup>15</sup> Moore takes on the role of public watchdog for American working people harassing and interrogating the power elite on the streets, or in their offices and homes. Yet by these same means, ideas of solidarity, formerly associated with the risky politics of organised labour are used to promote a more risk-free sense of politics, and revive the consumption of the social landscape.

### **Trying to reconcile aesthetic virtue and political virtue**

Notwithstanding their rhetorical shortcomings, the marketplace success of Moore’s agit-prop films could be taken as an indictment of the unpopularity of so many semi-official arts projects done in the name of ‘community.’ Typically, without a realist analysis of political conflicts — if they are represented at all — the social landscape is even more abstract than in Moore’s films.<sup>16</sup> So it is important to consider the structuring of the critical voice. In this respect the ethos of Magnum agency should be noted. What is said to unite the disparate approaches pursued by its members is a highly individualistic distrust of authority, or

*méfiance*; and this concept is used to capture their ethos.<sup>17</sup> This shared sense of scepticism underpins a virtuous discourse concerning representation among photographers which, nonetheless, leaves the structuring of the mass media intact and largely unchallenged. For Magnum supporting the careers of individual photographers and photography projects takes precedence over media reform.<sup>18</sup> In philosophical terms the clearest signal of the problem at hand is Jacques Rancière's assertion concerning aesthetics and politics that 'there is no criterion for establishing a correspondence between aesthetic virtue and political virtue'.<sup>19</sup> This standpoint influences the writing of left-leaning art historians such as Claire Bishop (2012) discussed in chapter three. Rancière's insistence that we are merely faced with 'choices' when it comes to aesthetic virtue lends support to the spirit of *méfiance* which becomes the source, and the frame, for aesthetic virtue among elites. Rancière does not pay sufficient attention to the social courtship practices, and the combination of powers, which turn into reified accounts of avant-garde political values and ritualised traditions of critique.

The original strength of Rancière's research (and in his dissent from the teachings of Louis Althusser) comes from his examination of historical experience and narrative. Rancière is not 'spontaneous vitalist' as the leftist philosopher Alain Badiou points out. Rather Rancière's 'democratic individual' is someone formed by historical structures but who is also capable of transforming them.<sup>20</sup> Unlike Foucault, Rancière does not find reason to announce 'the death of man', and rather like the British social historians E.P. Thompson (1968) or Jonathan Rose (2002) he finds class consciousness to be a lot more complex, imaginative and ultimately creative than the ideology of capital which brings it into being. Contra W.H Mallock's fractured morality discussed in chapter one, what appears to be very much alive is the tension between ideology and experience, between *social consciousness* and *social being*. The historical and biographical approach I take here shows how turning to the arts is one way to reconcile *what we know* and *what we are*. However the cost of this coherency of knowledge and social-life via the arts may be submission to the sect-like disciplines of the spiritual aristocracy.<sup>21</sup> At least this is what is suggested by the shift from the all-round sense of realism pursued by the workers' movement in the mass media to Magnum's artistic commodification of professional reportage. Although not the topic of my discussion with Toby Lowe these issues — known to me first as a photographer — informed my questions to Lowe about his background and career.

### **Reflections on a conversation with Toby Lowe**

Toby Lowe, born in 1973, was brought up in rural Suffolk where his parents had decided to set up home and live self-sufficiently on four acres of land. After a long period of preparation, they gave up their London jobs as BBC set-designers when Toby was three years old. He says it is possible that their desire to go back to basics, and eke out a living was known and was an influence on the creators of *The Good Life*, a celebrated BBC sit-com about a couple living self-sufficiently. I first interviewed Toby in 2011 when he was managing participatory arts programs at Helix Arts in Newcastle – one of the three northern English cities where he had applied for a university place in 1990 with the specific aim of experiencing the opposite of the ‘rural idyll’ of his parents’ making. Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield were the old industrial cities that attracted Toby as a young student who had been ‘switched on’ by the teaching of social history at his comprehensive school. Newcastle University won his allegiance mainly because of the added attraction of the city’s embracing social scene, something which he was introduced to on his very first visit as a prospective student.

*The Good Life* sit-com, which ran from 1975 to 1978, portrayed a slightly eccentric suburban married couple escaping ‘the rat race’ to become independent producers of most of their immediate needs such as food, clothes and electricity. The fictional characters had no children to interfere with this momentous decision, however Toby involuntarily lived out the reality of self-sufficiency between the ages of three and twelve, and he says, wryly, that it left him with an abiding horror of jumble sales. In the last serialised episode of *The Good Life* (in May 1977) things were worse; the couple’s house had been burgled and vandalised, an event that ruptures the normally gentle storylines of the series. The fictional good life had gone wrong but the main characters also find an occasion to come together and celebrate British resilience.<sup>22</sup> This very successful series captured the imagination of viewers who during the same period were experiencing an industrial crisis of international dimensions. The oil embargo, implemented by oil producing countries in the year Toby was born, led into the ill-fated attempt to establish the New International Economic Order (NIEO) to improve the terms of trade for developing nations. Although the NIEO, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1974, was ultimately defeated by all that is now called neoliberalism, its purpose was one of several signals that Britain had lost an empire and was yet to find a role, as the US statesman Dean Acheson had put it in 1962. At home British industry was also witnessing a rising tide of militancy. This was articulated most of all by a

shop stewards movement whose unofficial actions called into question the workability of a top-down pact between unions and management, and therefore, even more fundamentally, it called into question managers' right to manage. It may go without saying that these international and national pressures on the British social order culminated in Margaret Thatcher's stated aim to bring harmony to discord and hope to despair, a goal which paradoxically involved the massive closure of the country's industries and the turn towards finance capitalism.

Toby's upbringing, and his career trajectory up to 2011, reveals an almost archaeological slice through the governing structures of the 'post-industrial' decades ushered in by Thatcher's policies. Having studied politics and history, he went on to do a PhD on the concept of community. Toby's academic mission to define this concept was prompted by what he took to be the misuse of a term which had by this time become a political buzzword. On completing his PhD in 2000 there was no shortage of jobs mentioning community in their remit. He found his first post working as a regeneration officer with the Newcastle Council Voluntary Service – an umbrella body for the voluntary sector funded by Newcastle City Council. As he describes it, his job at the time was essentially to translate government policy into opportunities for charitable organisations and to help sustain their networks and to give them a collective voice. Three and half years spent working for their umbrella organisation in Newcastle gave him a keen understanding of social inclusion policies, and a sympathy for the ameliorative functions of the voluntary sector. Toby went on, in 2003, to work on the issues of economic inclusion for the regional development agency, One North East, where he engaged with the World Bank discourse promoting the American theorisation of social capital. He distances himself from this controversially simplified theoretical frame in retrospect. Looking back he also admits to being impatient with his place on the fringes of the One North East organisation and the lack of staff working in his specific area, so in 2004 he jumped at an opportunity to work at the Social Exclusion Unit in London where considerable financial and political resources were available for a post devoted to the issue of jobs and enterprise in deprived areas.

As we go on to explore in our conversation, Toby's experience of working nearer the heart of political policy in London ended in a palpable sense of disillusionment when he 'realised that the closer you get to power the more co-opted you become.' This was also the beginning of a turning point which encouraged him to look to the arts to help him establish a more meaningful life for himself and a more coherent application of social policy. Eventually, in

the context of an impervious State bureaucracy, he says; ‘I wanted to be able to look at myself in the mirror in the morning.’ It would be easy to only hear a cliché in these words but they have the ring of truth, perhaps because I suspect that failure dressed up as success might be particularly jarring for someone with Toby’s unconventional upbringing.

Both his parents were trained and well versed in the arts. He also describes them as politically middle of the road, and of course their self-sufficient lifestyle may be regarded as a rather romantic choice. At any rate Toby never wanted to follow their lifestyle and he says he always wanted to be ‘normal.’ His efforts to find a career engaged with the reality of modern society are already obvious. Yet, in his next two jobs, he did return to the cultural milieu of his family which along with his boyhood skills on the football pitch, meant that he was not too stigmatised by his parents’ partial, but nonetheless highly visible, disavowal of the dominant economic rationality. Although materially on a par with farm labourers’ children at the bottom of the pecking order in his school, lacking the clothes and toys which they lacked, he still belonged with a more prosperous set living in the school’s apparently un-deprived council estate catchment area. In this sense Toby’s early experience of rising above one’s personal material circumstances seems to resonate with some of his future beliefs about the arts ameliorating the rawness of class.

### **Narrative and Structure**

Before going any further into Toby’s story it is worth pausing to consider the sort of personal vignette I am offering here. It is not designed, along the lines of psychologism, to reduce politics and society to the individual’s psycho-social motives.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, in what follows I reflect on some of my own experiences and motives because these influenced the direction of our conversation, and the way I recount it here. Nor does this vignette uncover the whole architecture of cultural governance which Toby eventually entered into as a way of being more at peace with himself. However, what such an exchange may allow for, rather like an archaeological cross-section, is the piecing together of an image of social structures and individual agency. Of course an archaeological cross section cuts across inanimate remains and allows an image of a whole construction to be drawn up, whereas this image of social structuring is intended to uncover the interaction of contemporary institutions with the sort of human agency — complete with the practical reason, personal influences, justifications and hopes — personified by people interviewed in my research. With this clarification in mind we return to Toby’s story.

Although he was enormously impressed by the authority of the Social Inclusion Unit at a policy making level, the cause of his disillusion was the gradual realisation that the evidence it generated took second place to ingrained civil service systems and target setting. By 2004 it was plain to him that the overall system was incoherent, a general impression that was reinforced when evidence which he thought ought to have called for a review of the target setting practices in Job Centres was brushed aside by the Department of Work and Pensions. By this time he and some of his colleagues at the Social Inclusion Unit were laughingly describing their jobs as ‘faffing around at the edges.’ To get out of this particular civil service groove Toby found a post in 2005, heading Resource Development at the Arts Council in Newcastle. He says the key aim of this post was to ‘bring non-arts resources into the arts by highlighting [their] instrumental value.’ It is not clear whether or not Toby saw his job touching a raw nerve for many people in Arts Council networks in Britain. Certainly, the sector at this time was increasingly suspicious of the official emphasis on social instrumentality and many people wanted to highlight the intrinsic value of the arts, not their instrumental value. Their position received an important boost in 2004 when Tessa Jowell, then Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, wrote an essay questioning some of the official wisdom of instrumentalism.<sup>24</sup> If nothing else, the framing of Toby’s work at the Arts Council was already being undercut by this call from Westminster for a nuanced policy discourse. In keeping with many Arts Council careers Toby eventually moved from the position of being a manager of funds to being a recipient of funds when he joined Helix Arts in 2006. The system of revolving doors offered him an important exit point from the intellectual confines, and the frustrations, of his public service jobs up to this point. It also helped ensure the future of Helix Arts.

Toby was invited to join Helix after the Arts Council had indicated that the organisation’s bid for a quarter of a million pounds was likely to be successful. This funding gave Helix the chance to address issues of ‘quality’ that had taken second place to instrumental reasoning. We can also trace the organisational roots of my own research in this area here, since the remit for my PhD studentship came about through the contacts between Northumbria University and Helix Arts, calling for a study of the participatory arts and their possible intrinsic importance for ‘personal and community well-being’.<sup>25</sup> Here were considerable institutional efforts to identify the intrinsic merits of the arts and balance them with social purpose. Between Toby and me there is a decade of difference in our ages. He remembers seeing the 1984-85 miners strike on television as a child, and recalls his parents’ disapproval

of the miners' actions. At that time I was twenty-one years old and photographing mass marches and listening eagerly to those leaders who were making the most militant speeches. In broad terms, this was the political culture which socialists like me, with some creative skills, wanted to expand upon. The aesthetic dimensions of that desire in Britain often involved an unusual pact with liberal-humanism more than the sort of critical realism one might have expected. Not that we did not have a good example of the latter, notably in the efforts of John McGrath and the renowned 7:84 theatre company production of *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil*. But without the organisational capacities for such ventures, many of us were content to work creatively at a smaller scale, to compromise with various bureaucracies along the way, and perhaps to while away evenings under a mirror ball in the local Trades Council or Labour Club. That was participation too, insignificant as it may seem now.

The generational difference between Toby and me seems to be significant for number of reasons. Cultural participation may be synonymous, to someone of my background, with democratic capabilities. In our conversation Toby questioned my potential reduction of the importance of 'empowering people to flourish as whole human beings.' For my part, I hear a quasi-therapeutic language here that makes me wary. However, I don't think these different angles should be regarded simply as a matter of ideological differences. Of course they are present, and they ought to be reflected on as I will come to shortly. Nevertheless, generational differences are important to consider in their own right, in so far as they influence basic expectations and the sense of political ethics which are in turn played out in different forms of practical reason. At odds with his emphasis on empowering the whole human being, is the way Toby also stresses 'an understanding of the intrinsically limited nature of the ambition you've got to set yourself' when it comes to the business of funding. What I think we can witness in this case, are the nuances of historical temporality. When talking to Toby about the effects of State and corporate patronage on the form and content of participatory arts projects, the issue I am driving at, namely the lack of engagement and interest in the labour movement, comes as a completely unexpected question. So much so, that for a few moments Toby is animated by the thought that Helix might engage with trade unions and receive their support.

For my part, Toby's enthusiasm at this point reflects a widespread underestimation of what is entailed in collectivism at a large scale. We have not spoken about the historical proportions

of the attack on trade unions over the past quarter of a century, or what this may mean for their democratic capabilities and for society as a whole. However, between our relatively optimistic and pessimistic positions in this conversation, there is another level of contingency which concerns the production of social meaning and this provides additional insights into the relation between institutional structures and human agency. When Toby moved to Helix, his new job there was to review the whole range of programs under which various arts projects were conducted. He could not see a basic intellectual coherence between the three strands of community art, public art, and issue based campaigns pursued by Helix. It ought to be noted here that Toby's predecessors at Helix have a different view of their efforts. Esther Salamon stresses the responsiveness of the work that was done. Nevertheless, from Toby's point of view when Helix took on campaigns about climate change or youth unemployment, 'there seemed no basis for choosing one issue over another.' With additional Arts Council funding, Helix were able to draw a small group of luminaries together to develop the rationale for the organisation which was already fostering 'equality of access' to the arts. (They included François Matarasso of the Comedia think-tank discussed chapter six and eight). In those conversations, it was decided that participating in arts projects could 'equip people with the tools to examine, and to reflect on and communicate their personal and collective narratives.' This struck a chord with Toby's definition of community from his PhD research, namely that 'a community is a group of people who share identity forming narratives.'

Although such a definition is succinct it is, as Toby would be the first to admit, a blank slate that gives no clue to the practical reason and political meaning of community which, as he argues, 'is neither good or bad, it just is'. Nevertheless, what is meaningfully 'collective' in something as intangible as 'narrative' is no clearer than what might be 'personal' in community. It is surely only minimal collective virtues that are required for the creation of a narrative, and while a personal narrative might be popularised, it is by definition not collective. Moreover, if community is not confined to face to face relationships, then what about the meanings generated in the virtual community forming narratives seen in popular culture? Interestingly, Toby regards the manufactured culture synonymous with the *X Factor* talent show, as the greatest threat to quality in the participatory arts. But such talent shows also create 'communities', albeit around inspirational narratives of celebrity. So despite his adherence to community as a 'powerful term', what seems to be at issue for Toby, is not really community *per se*. Nor even a shared narrative perhaps. It seems to me that what we



are really talking about, in rather veiled terms, is the historical transition whereby society is organised in accordance with market values. Somehow — and it is still far from clear why — in this conversation ‘community’ represents an alternative to those values.

Many of Helix’s projects to date involve the sons and daughters, and now the grandchildren, of an industrial proletariat disenfranchised by the post-industrial economy and now seen by neoliberal policy discourses as in need of social capital. Towards the end of our conversation I asked Toby about governmentality so we could consider the lack of critical analysis and ideological risk-taking which I see in the Helix arts projects presented to me.<sup>26</sup> Toby’s response, which addresses the background of the organisation’s socially instrumental projects, is worth quoting at length. He says, ‘I know as well as anyone else that the root cause of all of this is the nature of (...) capitalism. And that a whole bunch of (...) problems around poverty, which is essentially all the things we witness around people’s damaged lives, are in some respects functions of poverty, and poverty generated by the way capitalism works. That’s my core belief. (...) But addressing that problem just appears too large to me. I simply don’t know what it is that can be done about that. (...) I can imagine an alternative [to capitalism] but what I can’t imagine are the steps between now and that alternative. (...) [W]hat I *can* imagine are things that ameliorate the position that we’ve got and that might create possibilities of the first steps towards the tackling of what you do about capitalism. (...) [Y]ou might be enabling class consciousness (...) if you’re enabling people to reflect on narrative construction and to form new ones. (...) Because (...) to me [class consciousness] is a process of narrative construction. So if you’re going to enable people to reflect on the processes of power that shape them, and give them some control back on that, that might be some first interesting steps to get from here towards an imagined alternative.’

Toby prefaced these remarks about the dominant economic system by telling me he would not normally use this language. Indeed, his summary also represents a particular sort of speech act orientated towards mutual understanding.<sup>27</sup> I don’t believe there is anything new to say in response to Toby’s sense of capitalism as an insurmountable object, and if there was, it would certainly not be true. I think his remarks ought to be situated within a trajectory of British ideas about culture and politics. In 1961 the historian E.P. Thompson reviewed Raymond Williams’ *The Long Revolution* — a book which was to become an important influence on the development of cultural studies and cultural history in British universities. Both men were founders of the first New Left in this country. Although broadly in support of

Williams' work one of Thompson's main criticisms of *The Long Revolution* was that Williams had not treated class as a 'way of conflict' but more as 'a way of life.'<sup>28</sup>

This academic debate has an indirect bearing on Toby's own long view and I will return to Thompson's points shortly, but what seems more immediately relevant to Toby's sense of capitalism as a problem just too large to address is the idea of self-sufficiency in the 1970s. Perhaps, above all else, this represented a retreat from tackling the dominant competitive logic of the global economy, at the very moment it was being called into question internationally. Always a prickly issue in the context of an imperial nation, no less so in its decline, this conceptual retreat from confronting the global system was to disable the political left when Margaret Thatcher's governments de-industrialised Britain. Revolutionaries and militants overestimated the potential for a mass uprising, while moderate Labour leaders underestimated how far the FIRE sector could go in reconfiguring the British economy along the lines of financial capitalism. The same conceptual retreat from tackling the logic of a global system based on the doctrine of international comparative advantage can be seen in the networks of the labour movement today. The general turn to communitarian politics in Britain was articulated most of all by New Labour and reflects the way the newly branded party no longer wished to derive power from the trade union movement.<sup>29</sup> There was only one real political option for New Labour to pursue from such a compromised position. That was to become the party most closely associated with the collective consumption of public goods and services, whilst at the same time hanging on to the coat tails of the growth being led by the FIRE sector. When New Labour came to power in 1997, manufacturing accounted for over 20% of the economy, this share was reported to have declined to 12.4% by 2007.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the decline of British manufacturing under New Labour was much steeper than under the Thatcher governments.

The communitarian ethos in Britain narrates class as 'a structure of feeling', to use Williams' term, and not as 'a way of conflict'. Indeed, the eschewal of confrontation is only too evident in a range of Helix projects presented to me by Toby following our conversation. The projects were comparable in so far as they all portray a remarkably flat social landscape. In visual work, for example, the physical and human geography of Newcastle has been reassembled and narrated as if to disavow, rather than resist, social hierarchy and processes of segregation. **[Figures 5.1 – 5.3]** The approach is at odds with the critical realism others have brought to the divided and contested industrial experience in this area of England. Because

of this aspect of cultural history, it would be tempting to show the various articulations of the social landscape in Helix projects as an integral aspect of a post-industrial turn, but this would be to ignore all the antecedents of the ‘gritty’ social landscape discussed at the outset of this chapter. These are perfectly congruent with the Helix participatory projects presented which touch on dysfunctional or conflictual experiences without ever really confronting what is dysfunctional about the structures of power. Tellingly, Toby’s colleague at Helix until 2011, Rob Laycock, reflects that they had assisted an artist who it was felt was doing personal work of a more critical nature but this was something they pursued informally at the time.<sup>31</sup>

**Figures 5.1 – 5.3** Page spreads from *Ynot? 03-05*, a book published by Helix Arts, showcasing work by the ‘Ynot? Group’ between 2003 and 2005. The program was organised with Sunderland City Council to run arts activities for young people ‘focussed on the aspirations of young parents and those leaving care’. From Helix Arts website (2015).

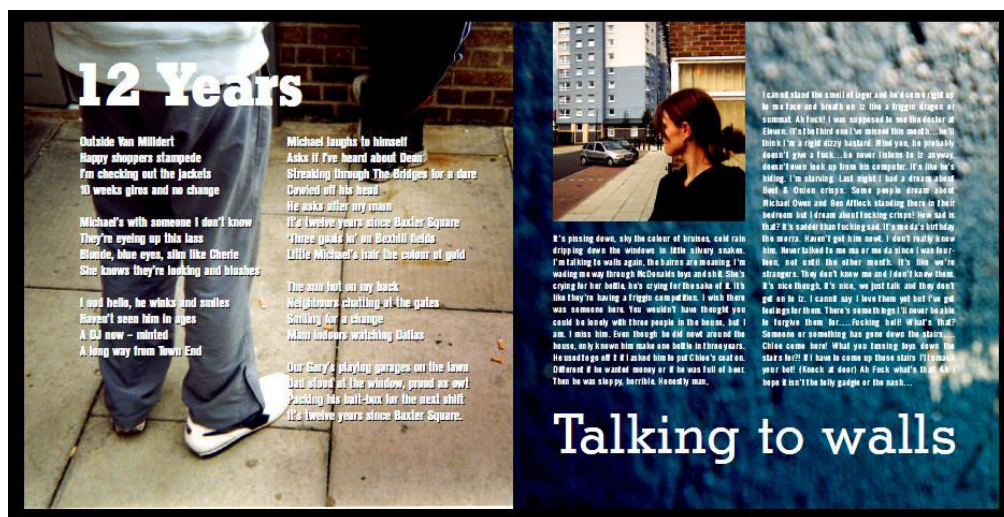


Figure 5.2



Figure 5.3



The intention of the social landscape genre has never been to cast light on power, if anything it offers a window onto the world *for* the powerful. As pointed out earlier the surveyed become self-surveyors. Although, the post-industrial experience is packaged in various styles and multi-media forms they all, in one way or another, conform to this de-politicised logic which, in the case of Helix, attracts sponsors such as the Lloyds TSB Foundation.<sup>32</sup> When it comes to the speech acts, hopes for social reconstruction arise from individual self-reflection and re-motivation which reiterate the *bildung* tradition (discussed in chapter two). Although presented in more gritty fashion these motivational sentiments may not be all that dissimilar from the redemptive logic of the *X Factor*. What Helix projects and the *X Factor* actually have in common, is a lack of critical reflection on the characteristics of the cultural form itself, whether it be the ambitions of talent shows or the ambitions of art as social policy. Yet, beyond this admittedly banal observation about a similarity in different modes of address and types of hard-selling there are people's hopes and desires.<sup>33</sup> The European aesthetic tradition still subjects these desires to ill-defined political standards and if anything the discourse of community in Britain, embraced by left and right alike, only exacerbates the problem.

Because the narrative terms of community, as an official organising discourse, are anything but clear, and their political authenticity likely to be illusory, one may wonder why Toby sees in them a radical and even 'subversive' potential? This question returns us to E.P Thompson. What seems to be at stake in Helix's political aesthetic is 'the dialectic of social being and social consciousness' which Thompson saw underpinning social change.<sup>34</sup> Like Toby, Thompson also defended the importance of people's narratives, especially as a means of

testing historians' methodology.<sup>35</sup> But Thompson's key concern was with how ideology works. As he argued, 'certain ideas from the pool of ideas are selected, endorsed by institutions, formulated in modern societies in educational forms, to give rise to a legitimating ideology which, [in conforming to the interests of particular groups] is something quite distinct from those ideas.'<sup>36</sup> In this sense ideology thrives by reaching down and appropriating knowledge and experience from the grass roots. Nevertheless, the reason Thompson thought narrative so important is that despite this success of ideology, 'experience' remains in constant tension with its structures. Toby's story of his own career is ample proof of the validity of Thompson's point.

## **Conclusion**

Thompson's argument returns us to the terrain of political aesthetics and political ethics. If the arts are one of the areas of life where the tension between experience and ideology is expressed most, the artefacts produced by the officially consecrated participatory arts often seem to express it least. The arts are in a state of constant ideological flux but in arguing for equality of access to them, one can still ask the question equality of access to what? If it is access to an ideologically closed system which trivialises some issues by dealing with them hastily and under-resourcing their development while at the same time there is a bureaucratic feeding frenzy around the discourses of the government of the day (e.g. community, multiculturalism, big-society, etc.) then equality of access to the arts devalues the meaning of equality.

Notwithstanding Toby's liberal virtues there are risks to the public interest if 'class-consciousness' is regarded as a narrative belonging to someone else. The universal basis for public funding is not as clear in the arts as it is in higher education where UNESCO sees critical autonomy as the best guarantee that universities serve the public interest and that public funding remains justified.<sup>37</sup> If autonomy is the justification for the tax payer's money then class consciousness and effective trade unions are needed in order to defend liberal values which appear increasingly dispensable to neoliberalism.<sup>38</sup> However, as subsequent chapters show, merely expressing the politics of class divided society does not lead to the politics of organised labour. Fascism of some kind is the greatest danger if class consciousness is regarded in woolly terms as a process of narrative construction. The danger of such a catch-all account is that it does not speak directly to our changing conditions of labour and to the global mechanisms which throw people into competition with one another.

Moreover, class consciousness — as a force for democracy — is surely derived from the understanding of an economic abstraction which surpasses the narrative scope and power of *community*. Otherwise, there would simply be no need for the word *class*.

In responding to these arguments Toby countered that ‘people do not develop a praxis of class consciousness merely by living it and that a narrative of class needs to be created and adopted.’<sup>39</sup> Part of the difficulty of doing this in the arts is that the ethos of communitarian politics has failed to engage with the precarious labour conditions that are common among people working in the creative industries.<sup>40</sup> The studies of labour in this context suggest that these sectors may be more of a ‘rat race’ than anything that Toby’s parents resisted, but as I discuss in the next chapter the pervasive cultural logic of post-industrialism promised something much more enticing. Systems theorists saw in post-industrialism an opportunity to reconcile structure and agency. The arts generally, and certainly not only in the form of *X Factor*, were one of the areas where the neo-management discourses envisaged people participating in reworking capitalism. Because of the all too obvious gap between the ideology and experience it was recognised that the spirit of the system is vital for its success. This reasoning has proven to be as life damaging as life enhancing, therefore there are risks involved in not looking at *all* competitive regimes in culture with equal scepticism.<sup>41</sup> What is most striking about contemporary political culture is not simply the weakness of trade unions and labour movements, but the evacuation of the labour theory of value and in turn, the rhetorical re-working of solidarity not so much as practice but as relatively risk-free discourses that can be consumed. The following chapters unravel this issue by looking comparatively at the emergence of instrumental claims in the arts first in Britain and then in Venezuela. On the basis of these comparative case studies in the next two chapters I go on to debate ‘the spirit’ of contemporary capitalism in the concluding chapter.

## **Coda**

Reflecting on political developments in 2013 Toby Lowe thought that Britain’s Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government, which came to power in 2010, had been disastrous for the welfare state. The government articulated a divide and rule strategy by characterising society as ‘strivers versus skivers’. However, Toby also thought the change in government had not been bad for the work of Helix. No longer involved in the delivery of the government objectives set by New Labour, Helix stopped working with young people in the criminal justice system, individuals ‘mandated’ to participate in the arts as part of their



rehabilitation. This was an expression of soft-power that Toby found troubling. He argued that Helix had more autonomy to pursue critical projects by working with charities, NGOs and lobby groups wanting to challenge and question aspects of the government ideology. Helix had moved away from the terrain of government policy, and closer to that of the good-faith economy. At this time Toby still stressed the importance of social narratives. However he acknowledged that compared to the mass media's role in 'narrative formation' Helix projects can only promise an 'impact' on the *individuals* who create counter-representations sponsored by the voluntary sector.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Foucault (2008).

<sup>2</sup> See Dews (1999).

<sup>3</sup> Barnett (2003), p.83.

<sup>4</sup> See *E.P. Thompson at the 1977 SSRC Seminar on Models of Social Change* (part 3) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD3Gsk8M94I&feature=related> (Last accessed February 2011). Thompson's point about the tension between ideology and experience is similar to the Foucauldian concern with the way power inevitably produces resistance of one kind or another. From both critical perspectives the issue is the ideological structuring of resistance and how it functions to support or undermine power.

<sup>5</sup> See Nochlin (1990), pp. 226-247.

<sup>6</sup> Eric Rinka, one of the founders of the worker-photographers movement was interviewed in 1977. Asked how the serial form of photography which they had pioneered had come about, Rinka replied: 'It was based on the awareness that a worker photographer was class conscious (sic) needed the ability to see certain things in connection with certain others. That was the only way the broad public could be shown these connections and have explained its own situation as a class.' See Osman, C. (Ed.) (1981), p.72.

<sup>7</sup> Cartier Bresson (1952), p.14.

<sup>8</sup> See 'Surveyors and Surveyed, Photography Out and About', by Price, in Wells (1997) (ed.), p.91.

<sup>9</sup> For a fuller account of the transition I am describing see 'Where Pathos Rules, The Resource Curse in Visual Culture' by Owen Logan, in McNeish and Logan (2012) (eds.) pp.98-130.

<sup>10</sup> For a candid first-hand account of the successes and failures of Magnum see the 2002 interview with Philip Jones Griffiths by Bob Dannin, *Musarium*, <http://www.musarium.com/stories/vietnaminc/interview.html> (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>11</sup> Ignatieff (2000), p.56. This has indeed become a very fine line at least in theory. According to Jacques Rancière's (2007) aesthetic theory, some workers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century entered an aesthetic realm whereby they reached the point of becoming spectators amid their own class and in this

intellectual sense - which he privileges - they experienced equality. In some ways photographers who emerged from the workers' photography movement such as the New York Photo League member, Walter Rosenblum, anticipate the issue of trespassing onto the terrain of spectator or the *flâneur*, and make their awareness of it clear. As Rosenblum asserted in 1948, 'we're not (...) tourists spying on the quaint mannerisms of the people.' See Ollman 1994, p.157.

<sup>12</sup> See Vettel-Becker (2005).

<sup>13</sup> See 'A Contribution to the Critique of Post-Imperial British History: North Sea Oil, Scottish Nationalism and Thatcherite Neoliberalism', by Terry Brotherstone, in McNeish and Logan (2012) (eds.), pp.70-97.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Tagg (1988), Solomon-Godeau (1992).

<sup>15</sup> For an account of the Moore's uneasy relationship with Hollywood see <http://carlunegbu.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/michael-moore-versus-the-weinstein-brothers-washing-hollywoods-dirty-laundry-in-public/> (Last Accessed March 2015).

<sup>16</sup> Moore's approach to documentary raises several issues. As I have suggested there is a critical gap between his confrontational rhetoric and the subtle realities of corporatist political settlements in which a range of civil society groupings including trade unions are implicated. A significant Hollywood production which deals with compromised character of trade union power is the 1978 feature film *Blue Collar*, co-written and directed by Paul Schrader. This crime drama deals with the union corruption and the lack of solidarity among unionised workers in a car factory. The three main characters decide to rob their local union office, and in doing so they discover an even greater crime perpetrated by the union officials. Moore's documentaries tend to pass over such inconvenient themes and Gabriel Rockhill's criticism of Moore's style is that it suffers from 'monocausal determinism.' In other words, Moore looks for answers which are rather too plain and simple. (See Rockhill and Watts (2009), pp. 212-215.) Moore's films explore the social causes of particular situations and they address their ongoing consequences, but in doing so they may fail to give a satisfying account of the social whole. Although not put in these terms, this seems to be what Rockhill is driving at by unfavourably comparing Moore's (2002) documentary, *Bowling for Columbine*, with Gus Van Sant's (2003) feature film *Elephant*. Both productions relate to the 1999 Columbine High School massacre in Colorado. For Rockhill the two films exemplify the difference between a consciousness raising approach (Moore) and a consciousness reflexive approach (Van Sant). Rockhill argues that the latter approach exemplifies the way political and aesthetic virtues are entwined. Rockhill's argument makes the latter approach appear synonymous with the avant-garde aesthetic tactics, not the sort of realist narrative exemplified by *Blue Collar*. Van Sant's *Elephant* employs a series of moments as a structuring device whereby the plotline revisits various chance encounters during the run up to the shootings in the school; each time from the point of view of a different character. In doing so *Elephant* insinuates a concern with such things as teenage self-image, eating disorders, repressed sexuality and general anomie. Here societal anomie appears to be caused by everything and nothing in particular; indeed this is the quality which makes *Elephant* important for Rockhill and gives meaning to the film's title which alludes to something that cannot be grasped. However the comparison of Van Sant's film with Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* follows the conventions of an *auteur* focused discussion, and so Rockhill overlooks the socio-political roots of realism, and the subsequent upward distribution of ideological risk-taking in cultural production. My own mention of these films is directed at the latter problem of the critical voice discussed in chapter two.

<sup>17</sup> Fred Ritchen, writing on the Magnum, sees *méfiance* as 'a kind of skeptical or suspicious defiance' to be the cohesive value shared by members of the agency, which, in other respects, is seen as 'a citadel of contradictions'. See Ritchen (1987), p.443.



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<sup>18</sup> See interview with Philip Jones Griffiths by Bob Dannin, January 2002, online at <http://www.musarium.com/stories/vietnaminc/interview.html> (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Rancière (2004), p.61.

<sup>20</sup> Rockhill and Watts (2009), p.4.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps more than most the case of the Magnum agency provides many examples of a spiritual aristocracy which recognises itself, and goes to great lengths to be recognised as such. At the end of 'The Magnificent One: Philip Jones Griffiths', a film by Donna Ferrato and Emmanuel Trousse, Magnum photographer Alex Webb's retells of a joke by fellow photographer Hiroji Kubota which captures this sense of collective artistic validation. Webb says, 'You know Hiroji's famous, favourite thing, what he said about joining Magnum: "You become nominee, you must say nothing. You become associate, you must say nothing. (...) You become member, — Fuck You! — Fuck You! — Fuck You!" Pretty good uh.' Available online, <https://vimeo.com/62143655> (Last accessed June 2017).

<sup>22</sup> *The Good Life* (Series 4 Episode 7), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lfnvxv\\_2UkY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lfnvxv_2UkY) (Last accessed February 2015).

<sup>23</sup> See Mills (2000), p.67-68 ff.

<sup>24</sup> See Jowell (2004) <http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/valueofculture.pdf> (Last accessed March 2012).

<sup>25</sup> The original aims and objectives of the PhD studentship were localised and intended to 'contribute to a wider programme of research into the extent to which engagement in creative activity can be perceived as intrinsically important to personal and community well-being amongst residents of the Shieldfield community in Newcastle'. See Shieldfield Close-Up: A University and Community Engagement participatory arts research project into creative practice and well-being. Project Description (RS10-SASS04), Northumbria University.

<sup>26</sup> At my request the projects discussed in chapter were those that Toby Lowe and his colleagues at the time felt were a good representation of their management of Helix.

<sup>27</sup> See Karl-Otto Apel, 'Openly Strategic Uses of Language: a transcendental-pragmatic perspective (a second attempt to think with Habermas against Habermas)' in Dews P. (1999) (ed.), p.273.

<sup>28</sup> See Thompson (1961) [Part Two], p.34.

<sup>29</sup> For example, Ronnie McDonald, a North Sea oil worker and one of the founders of the first post-Thatcher trade union, the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee, (OILC) remembers Tony Blair electioneering in 1997 at the Aberdeen Trades Council. If elected, Blair promised to repeal Thatcher's anti-trade union laws and McDonald recalls this moment vividly as 'Blair's first lie' as it later became clear that Blair had almost immediately given the opposite assurance to the employer's organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, (CBI).

<sup>30</sup> Although regarded as a problematic trend on all sides of the political spectrum; on the right the figures (from a Financial Times analysis), were of course greeted as a vindication of Conservative policy. See report Industry 'has declined more under Labour than Thatcher', by Sam Fleming, (4 December 2009) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1232897/Manufacturing-decline-Labour-greater-Margaret-Thatcher.html> (Last accessed May 2016).

<sup>31</sup> From authors' interview with Rob Laycock (2011).

<sup>32</sup> I am referring here to works selected by Toby Lowe and Rob Laycock as representative examples of the projects done by Helix during the time they worked together running the organisation. Helix has a long-standing relationship with the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales.

<sup>33</sup> For examples of what I describe as 'hard-selling', see presentations on Helix projects at <http://www.helixarts.com/> (Last accessed March 2015). The discourse of 'art' hovers on the boundary between an ethos of public service and the marketisation of public services.

<sup>34</sup> See E.P. Thompson at the 1977 SSRC Seminar on Models of Social Change, op.cit.

<sup>35</sup> For Thompson orthodox Soviet Marxism was an example of this process of appropriation and reduction. Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> See 'Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, (1997) General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris. [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13144&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13144&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (Last accessed March 2012).

<sup>38</sup> See Knight (2006).

<sup>39</sup> From email correspondence. I am indebted to Toby Lowe for reading the draft of this chapter and responding by to my arguments.

<sup>40</sup> See for example McRobbie (2004; 2011) and Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011).

<sup>41</sup> As pointed out in chapter one the underlying problem is well encapsulated by Manuel Castells. See Castells and Ince (2003), p.31.

## Chapter 6

### Techno-spirituality:

### Blue Skies and Britain's Post-industrial Voyage

Kenneth Williams (...) *the examples of planning blight which you do see, things like the dreadfulness of the Elephant and Castle which used to be a place of humanity and warmth (...) which is now just a concrete desert and a mess and an absolute disgrace (...). The first act of a socialist government, a government which says it is socialist, the first act they should make should be to stop all that and say homes — homes are the most important thing. It makes me sick to hear all this crap about; oh let's have a youth club, let's have a theatre built (...) let's having something else built... No good all that, cultural activities are no good if there is no home to go to. (...)*

Sir John Betjeman *Absolutely true. (...) And if possible on the ground!*

Williams (...) *It makes me very angry, I think it's an absolute scandal, yet they can all get worked up over a couple of pound in their pay-packet (...) and go on strike. (...) I mean if unions really care, if they're really socialistic, and say they really care about their fellow man, why can't they force... why can't they march about something like that instead of another pound for themselves. (...)*

Michael Parkinson *But that's not the unions' problem, it's not the unions' fault, that condition.*

Williams *What's that statue outside the TUC? Have you looked at that statue (...) [it] depicts a man helping, he's helping up another man whose on the ground. And that statue symbolises what the TUC stands for. (...) Right. Well when a union does something like jeopardising the work of their fellow men, if you stop trains people can't get to their work can they? (...) So in doing what you want for yourself you're jeopardising your fellow men aren't you. Why can't you act in concert with your fellow men, why do you have to do something which endangers the livelihood of your fellow men when that statue represents exactly that; helping not hindering.*

Parkinson *Because it might be (...) to take two workers, that one fellow is a lot worse off than the other worker, they're not all equal are they? If they were all equal there'd be no problem.*

Williams *Precisely but it comes down to a question of morality. You don't just work for another pound. When I took my job at three pound ten a week (...) doing small parts, I came out of the army in 47 and that's what I got. (...) But because I wanted to do the job and wanted to do it well I got on (...) I did seven years in the provinces before I came to London. And I think if you're prepared to do that kind of thing, what are you doing it for? You're not saying I want another pound all the time, you're saying I want to do the work better. That was the kind of morality I was brought up with. You don't do a job just for what you get. You do the job because you want to do it well.*

Parkinson *Oh but Kenneth, can I say that's crap. Williams I've never been so insulted!*

Parkinson *It's all very well you saying that, all of us here in jobs that are creative, where you can see (...) if you've got a talent you can get to the top and you can get (...) a handsome living. You're not going to tell me that you can be compared to someone that's sticking door handles on a car for ten hours a day, five days a week, that he's not going to get frustrated, that he doesn't deserve an extra quid if he wants one. Of course his work ethic is money, it's got to be, he doesn't get the satisfaction from the job that we get.*

Williams *You are talking...* [turns to the audience] *His inference is that the man whose sticking doorknobs on has got a job that's monotonous and dreary...*

Parkinson *Absolutely*

Williams *What do you think doing something night after night... I've done this play at The Globe... I've said it so many times I'm beginning to wonder what it means. You keep on saying anything long enough and you begin to think you're daft don't you?*

Maggie Smith *That's the trouble. Everybody does seem to think that our work is glamorous.*

Williams *It's not at all, it's the simple business of self-discipline and going on night after night and doing it as well as you can. And if I have to stick doorknobs on, and I've done it, I've painted my own walls (...) I do it because I like doing it, I want to do it well.*

Parkinson *But the other difference is that the guy who goes on strike is not earning your salary, he's not earning four of five hundred quid a week.*

Williams *What about the period I didn't have any success and I spent (...) seven years in the provinces bumming around. That wasn't very successful!*

Parkinson *No of course not but there was always (...) because you backed your talent in an area where talent pays off in the end, then you had a horizon you could see ahead.*

Williams *But what are you asking for? A world where every single job leads to some marvellous end?*

Parkinson *Yes!* Williams *Well all jobs can't be like that.*

Parkinson *Precisely. And that's the problem. So therefore you must allow people their frustrations.*

Williams *No, they must accept their limitations surely.*

Parkinson *Oh! Oh come on. That's...that's a superman argument.*

Williams *It isn't. Voltaire said every man must dig in his own bit of garden. There wasn't much wrong with Voltaire's philosophy, was there!*

Parkinson *Sir John, can we have a calm word because Kenneth and I are getting rather excited.*

The Parkinson show, BBC television broadcast, 17 February 1973<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

A major change of emphasis in mainstream socialist thinking allowed for the re-navigation of Britain's post-imperial political economy. The changes are often described in the language of post-industrialism. In what follows I show how the discourse dignifies a course of events which is more consistent with Britain's imperial history. In the phase I examine, great faith was placed in a combination of finance capitalism and artistic creativity as a means of providing workers with new and different benefits which would overcome the politics of employment discussed in the above interview.

Speaking on the BBC's ever popular talk show *Parkinson*, the comic actor Kenneth Williams (1926-1988) sparkled more than usual during his interview, joined by the poet John Betjeman and the actress Maggie Smith. This is not so much because of Williams's camp style and wildly effete mannerisms, more because at moments he sounded more like a socialist than the socialist leaders of the time. However in an exaggerated form he also epitomised the meritocratic beliefs of Britain's spiritual aristocracy; a weakness that became more obvious three weeks later when Williams appeared again, this time to debate with the then Communist Party trade unionist Jimmy Reid (1932-2010). Five years had already gone by since a group of academics wrote *Matters of Principle, Labour's Last Chance*, published as a Penguin Special in 1968.<sup>2</sup> The book critiqued the betrayal of key socialist aims in domestic and foreign policy during Harold Wilson's (1916-1995) first period as Prime Minister from 1964-1970. This was when Britain was supposedly undergoing a socio-economic 'revolution' forged in what Wilson famously called the 'white heat of technology'.<sup>3</sup> Although this was an immensely popular idea, first put forward in Wilson's speech at the 1963 Labour Party conference, by the end of the decade revolutionaries and socialists on the left of the labour movement saw his revolution as a major set-back for social democracy and a licence for technocracy. For the most part their calls fell on deaf ears.

Before turning to this story of technocratic thought in Britain, it is worth recalling the key questions for this thesis: (1) how the arts and politics speak to each other; and (2) whether there are significant differences between artistic instrumentalism coming from above, or from below, in the political order. The argument on *Parkinson* provides a valuable insight into the first of these questions; particularly by exposing issues that are sometimes veiled by the discourses of well-being. The argument centres on psychological advantages which exemplify the meritocratic spirit; and virtues such as commitment, perseverance and self-discipline which, it was felt, ought not to be the preserve of success in the arts, at least in the

ideal world to which Michael Parkinson alludes. Drawing on primary sources, interviews, and my observations as a participant, this chapter begins to examine such claims in relation to grass-roots artistic instrumentalism in Britain's so-called post-industrial period. Using the same methods the following chapter offers a critical comparison by turning to artistic instrumentalism from above, albeit in the context of Venezuela's avowedly anti-imperialist Bolivarian revolution. I weigh up the differences, similarities and discursive overlaps from these two research contexts in chapter eight.

Individuals, social groups and peoples in different historical periods have had very different ideas about the relationship between art and power. These differences have tended to be reduced to a rather simplistic dualism. On the one hand there is the belief in the autonomy of art — an autonomy that nonetheless requires considerable support politically and economically from the good-faith economy that bridges State and society. This mixed support occurs in various countries through an array of government agencies and private foundations and high-level patronage which, conducted in good-faith, at least give the appearance of distancing artistic activities from the government of the day and general market forces. On the other hand there is the more resigned recognition of art's institutional and commercial dependency, and the un-glamorous workaday realities stressed by Williams and Smith above. As discussed in chapter one recent governments sought to merge these viewpoints under the banner of the creative industries. Thus relatively autonomous creativity and inventiveness is supposed to drive broader socio-economic well-being with numerous explicitly commercial spin-offs. Yet if one believes in artistic autonomy, then the arts are likely to appear as a pillar of freedom which is being crudely undone. As this chapter shows there is nothing new in this. However it does open the door to an alternative form of politics which, all too often, looks like a cat and mouse game between institutionalised power and smaller politically insignificant creative groups, or even individual writers and artists.

Given this political weakness, the instrumental idea that the arts are a social catalyst and an effective path to greater well-being for marginalised classes or groups is at best very doubtful. It needs to be asked if the arts can do the things asked of them and under what circumstances? If one accepts the political weaknesses of the arts, the optimum goal might be the abolition of instrumentalism, so that everyone can enjoy the arts for their own sake. As with access to sports, current levels of income inequality would mean that equal access to the arts, simply for their leisure value, would demand greater subsidies and represent a major

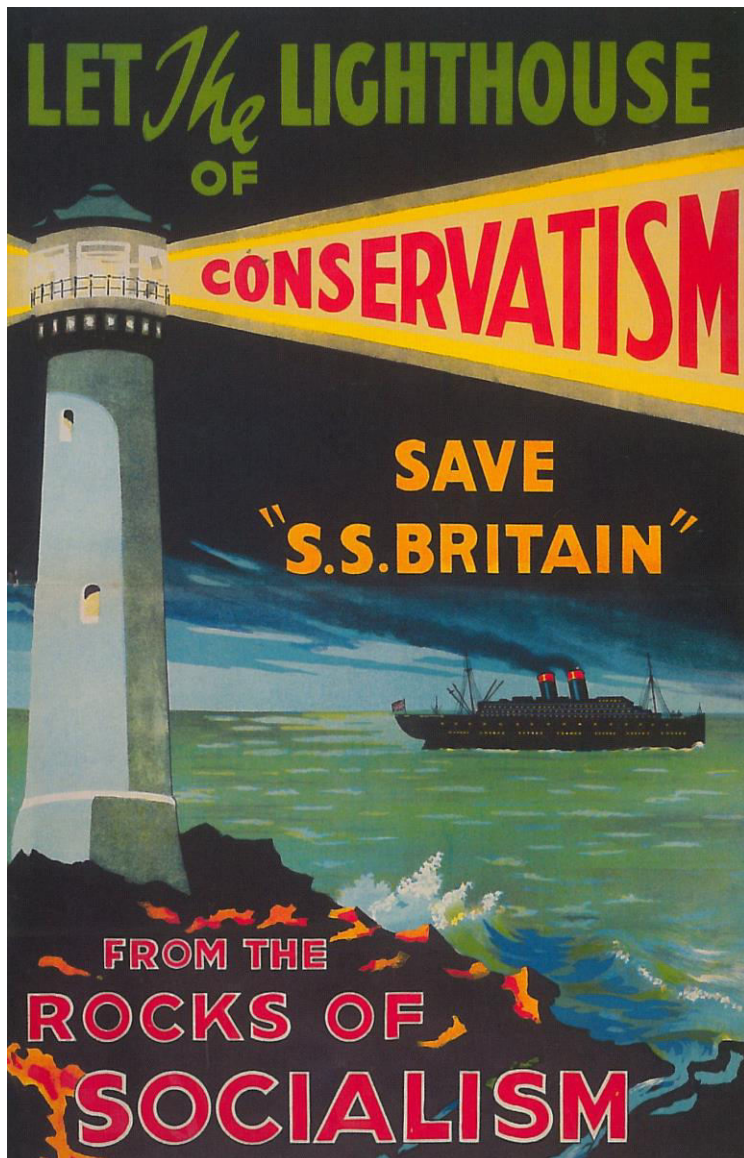
egalitarian undertaking for the State. As the discussion in the previous chapter showed, the principle of equal access also informs the activities of people working in the arts in a more piecemeal fashion at different levels or in different types of organisation. However from the 1980s on the structural problems of income inequality and the rising costs of many leisure activities became even more of a constraint for Britons. The same principle of access found a fuller expression in the Scandinavian social-democratic philosophy of the welfare State. At its highpoint, roughly from the 1950s to 1980s, the practical goal of this welfare discourse was much more than social insurance, it aimed to liberate the personality from the traditional constrictions of family, church and economic status. Therefore, in the Scandinavian context, it could be suggested that society might dispense with the compensatory and instrumental functions of the arts, although some writers and artists were to respond latterly with dystopian accounts of the attempt to create a progressive society.<sup>4</sup>

On examination it is difficult not to favour the Scandinavian approach to welfare. However this point is relatively incidental to my analysis of a courtship that has been conducted in, and focused on the arts; and which produced an alternative belief system also devoted to advancing personal autonomy. Here self-fulfilment is not to be gained through a radicalised welfare model but through the modes of creativity promoted by the arts. The heavily institutionalised dualism of autonomy or dependency does not tell us very much about what drives a form of instrumentalism which displaces welfare goals or, indeed, the moral ideas that draw art and politics together in discussions like the televised one above. Yet the conceptions of virtue epitomised by that argument are very telling and will be a key to the analysis throughout this chapter. My aim, both here and in the next chapter, is to examine how a technocratic, yet highly spiritual discourse, undermined basic social democratic aims, both in Britain and in revolutionary Venezuela.

Even those who still expect the arts to correspond to liberal or left-wing virtues when those of the right are in ascendance leave the underlying philosophy of virtue largely unexamined. The class-conscious playwright Gregory Motton, author of *Helping Themselves - The Left Wing Middle Classes in Theatre and the Arts* mentioned in chapter one is an example. Motton (2009) is enraged by the double standards of left-wingers in the arts; however from the perspective of moral philosophy the scarcity, or at least the unpredictability of virtue in the arts, looks like the tip of an iceberg. To cultural conservatives and religious converts in this area of philosophy, like the ever-popular C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) who gently opposed the emergence of a 'polite' but none the less dog-eat-dog 'society held together entirely by fear

and greed',<sup>5</sup> or to a more forthright anti-capitalist like former Marxist Alasdair McIntyre, author of *After Virtue* (2007), the main problem is that there are fewer coherent religions, institutions and forms of governance to give us concrete assurances about social paths to virtue.<sup>6</sup> From this angle aesthetic philosophy is only a fraction of that larger quandary brought about by the collapse of the medieval world and its socio-economic bonds. If we follow this historical-philosophical line then an interest in participation in the arts, and in egalitarian virtues in the arts, must really be matched by a great interest in the fate of democracy and socialism.<sup>7</sup> By scaling up from the last chapter which discussed the dilemmas of Toby Lowe, an individual arts administrator, I try to keep that balance in what follows. I do not offer a survey but a cross section through shifting political morals.

**Figure 5.1** Conservative Party 1929 general election poster. Britain's political and economic success has often been visualised by conservatives in the terms of a voyage. Image from Ball (2011).





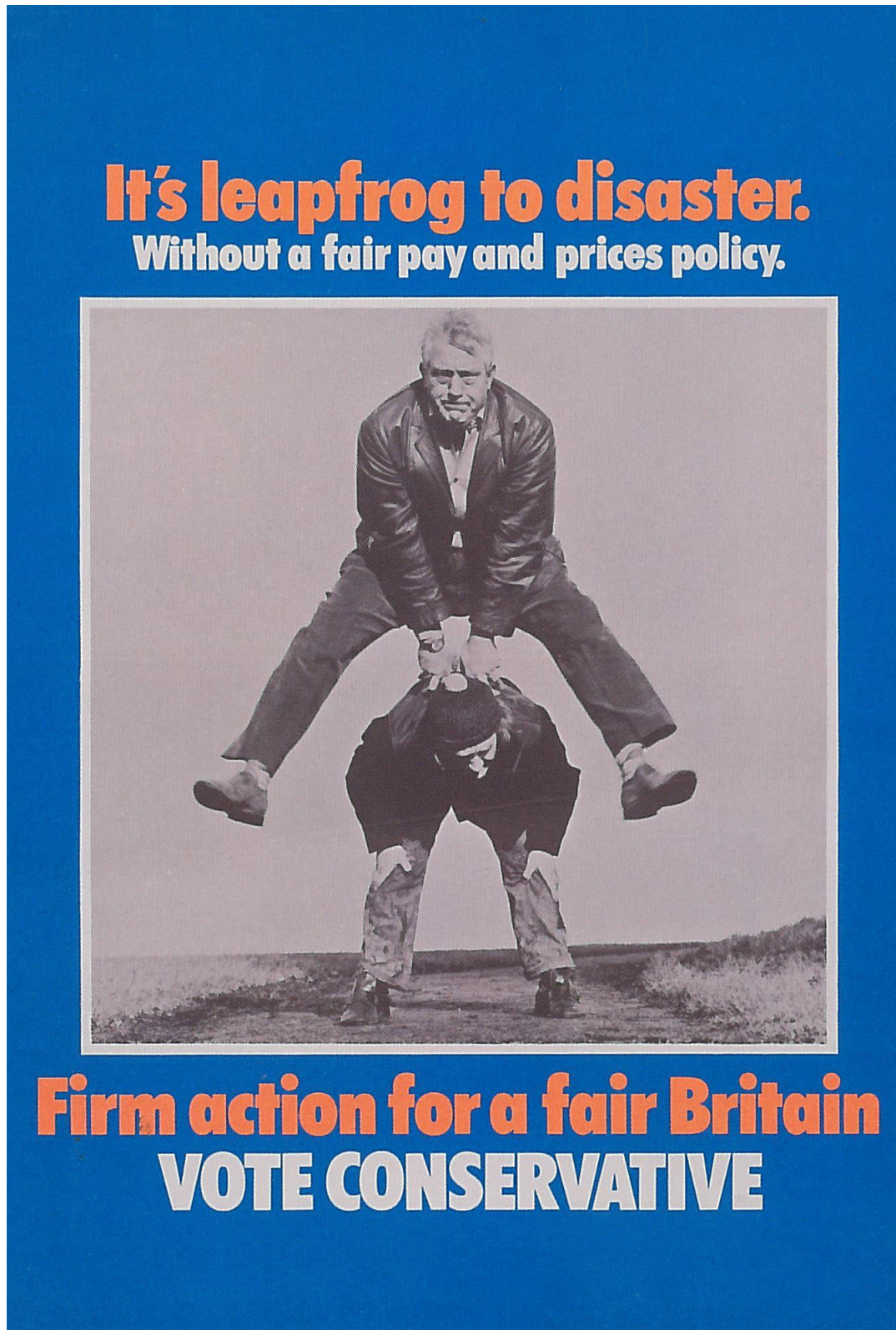
### **Situating the argument**

Two political casualties stand out in Britain's post-industrial phase; the hopes for industrial democracy and the hopes for cultural democracy. In a now classic study first published in 1968, *Industry and Empire*, Eric Hobsbawm [1917-2012] (1999), historian and a prominent member of the Communist Party points out that British imperialism at the political level was both formal and informal; although at the economic level its first effect was to abolish the peasantry it was not particularly attached to industrial production. While the empire grew up around the "muck and brass" Victorian mentality, by the Edwardian era the public school ethos had taken control to the detriment of the technological and scientific professionalism necessary for industrial success.<sup>8</sup>

Hobsbawm's remarks about the informality of imperialism are significant because of neo-colonialism. As the Palestinian American cultural scholar Edward Said [1935-2003] pointed out, the thinly disguised imperialism of the United States proceeds through a 'market place of ideas.'<sup>9</sup> This marketplace centres on formulating policy discourses with an eye to short term demonstrable results, selling potential improvements and efficiencies to the existing state of affairs both nationally and internationally. The vendors are technocratic consultants and think-tanks, and foundations of various kinds, often with multiple policy concerns. The same sort of marketplace became evident in Britain as the country's post-imperial interests were re-navigated more in terms of complex theories about culture and the arts, than in overtly political or economic discourse. As result we now have a spectacle in which the arts are rendered as a site of the economic virtues and creativity which the organised working class lacks; an outlook articulated by Williams in the discussion above.

In some ways this discourse was aided by Hobsbawm himself. Nor is it so ironic given that he had spent most of his life downplaying the political abolition of the working class in the Soviet Union. By 1978 his view of British trade unions was not all that dissimilar from Williams's. According to Hobsbawm's analysis struggles for pay were not so much a response to material inequalities, as Parkinson — the son of a Yorkshire miner — suggested, but the sins of an exorbitant economism.<sup>10</sup> Here Hobsbawm actually echoes earlier conservative anti-trade union propaganda.<sup>11</sup> **[Figure 5.2]**

**Figure 5.2** Conservative Party 1974 general election poster. The message refers to the right-wing argument that a competition in wage rises was responsible for inflation, not a credit boom licensed by Edward Heath Conservative government from 1970-1974. Image from Ball (2011)





**Figure 5.3** Conservative Party 1987 general election poster. The caption underneath the photograph says, 'Labour promises to legalise secondary picketing and to destroy the Conservative trades union reforms that have brought us the lowest level of strikes for nearly fifty years'. Image from Ball (2011)



Hobsbawm proposed that the problems of the labour movement required a new kind of political leadership. The Communist Party's reformist magazine *Marxism Today* which published his writings was to announce early support for Tony Blair.<sup>12</sup> What they wanted did not transpire; and after Blair's election in 1997 it became clear that Labour Party leaders were unwilling to repeal Conservative trade union laws, and that a new generation of trade union leaders were ready to adapt to the profound socio-economic changes involved in the ongoing de-industrialisation of Britain. The theorists of socio-technical systems whom I discuss later, such as Sir Geoffrey Vickers (1894-1982) Fred Emery (1925-1997) and Eric Trist (1909-1993) believed these changes to the economy could resolve many of the dilemmas brought to the fore more than once on the *Parkinson* show.

In mainstream discourse the *Parkinson* discussion signals a turn away from ideas about the need to change the social experience of the arts to the idea that it was at least as important to change the character of work. The idea of changing the social experience of art was fairly well established in the 1940s as a result of John Maynard Keynes' (1883-1946) rationale for the newly created Arts Council of Great Britain.<sup>13</sup> Alongside more conservative priorities it was envisaged that one of the functions of the Arts Council was to see that art could develop in unexpected ways through wider participation, hence the need for the community facilities which Williams mocked. Parkinson voices the other imperative, well beyond the reach of the Arts Council, the need to change the character of ordinary jobs.

During the period of industrial conflict in the 1970s the discussion above amply fulfilled the public service broadcasting directive to inform, educate and entertain, and did so all at once. Yet it was to create tension within the BBC when Williams appeared again on the *Parkinson* show in the debate with the trade union leader, Jimmy Reid.<sup>14</sup> Reid was the leader of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in between 1971 and 1972. The second discussion which, very unusually for the *Parkinson* show also included the audience, was equally fractious and humiliating for Williams who was seen — even by his admirers — to be 'out of his depth'.<sup>15</sup> A wide ranging argument brought out Williams's belief in continual or unlimited dialogue with employers or political leaders. Alongside this Schillerian expression of good-faith Williams appeared far too uninterested in the striking inequalities in the education system and the issues of trade union militancy raised by the audience and taken up quite enthusiastically by Reid. Paul Fox, the BBC controller, put a stop to further discussion along these lines on what was supposed to be a light entertainment programme. Evidently it was thought that

politics required micro-management and 'clowns must stay clowns.'<sup>16</sup> By the 1980s other comedians identified a gap and were filling it in a single-handed fashion. Alternative comedy came to the fore in this period.

Another Williams, the socialist cultural scholar named Raymond, saw an irrepressible vitality in popular comedy and music which sought 'to live beyond the routines which attempt to control and reduce them'.<sup>17</sup> Like the authors of *Matters of Principle* above, Raymond Williams and other "New Left" intellectuals had opposed what they saw as Wilson's technocratic agenda for Britain in *The May Day Manifesto* of 1967-68. However, by the 1970s Williams had taken up the cause of Welsh nationalism. Jimmy Reid eventually gravitated to Scottish nationalism in the 1990s. It is interesting that many in the New Left, especially writers later associated with *Marxism Today*, spoke less about imperialism as something conducted by people with names and addresses, e.g. Tiny Rowland (1916-1998) or Margaret Thatcher's son and inheritor of his father's baronetcy, Mark. Theories of 'new times', 'Thatcherism' and 'dis-organised capitalism' came to account for massive socio-economic changes taking place across the British Isles.<sup>18</sup> When left-leaning analysts looked at the so-called developing nations, dependency on natural resources — 'the resource curse' often replaced more detailed socio-economic analysis of the class relations guiding foreign venture capital to local and traditional power bases.<sup>19</sup>

Is British capitalism disorganised? Edmund Burke's marathon attempt, starting in 1787, to prosecute Warren Hastings of the East India Company (see chapters three and four) shows that from the very beginning, imperialism was cloaked in images of charity and voluntary action.<sup>20</sup> The irrepressible energy which Raymond Williams (1989) admired, can become a politically controlling factor too when incorporated by the good-faith economy. Indeed Karl Marx argued that comedy marks the historical passing of political orders; as the securities of *ancien régime* collapsed, the 'modern' aristocracy nurtured cheerfulness in the face of the new political economy.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the greatest political achievement of the celebrity culture where art, politics and entertainment merge today is also its greatest controversy; the Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign organised to lobby the 2005 meeting of the G8. Not only were MPH's declared victories on international debt-relief and foreign aid conditional on adherence to neo-liberal policies, but the campaign provided Tony Blair's government with a massive distraction from the mass-demonstrations against the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq which had seen much public discussion about the motivation for war. MPH celebrities headed by Bob Geldof and Bono, alongside cultural entrepreneurs like the film director

Richard Curtis, and government friendly charities such as Comic Relief and Oxfam worked to keep the issues of poverty and war firmly apart just when it seemed most relevant to talk about their linkages. The character of MPH was recognised after the event when even the charities felt deceived.<sup>22</sup>

The important point here about this case of artistic instrumentalism from above is that there was nothing disorganised about MPH, neither was it simply misled. The British wing of MPH had 540 member organisations and in 2005 an estimated 250,000 people congregated in Edinburgh to ‘welcome’ the G8 leaders to Scotland. Here trade unions were seen acting in concert to help poor nations. The reported web of formal and informal connections between politicians, charities, religious organisations, businesses, cultural entrepreneurs and trade unions makes it the largest one-off governmental initiative ever to be seen in British civil society. If British capitalism is disorganised it has done no great harm to the ideological dynamics of corporatism. Nevertheless, the failure to sustain corporatist pay-offs for the working class (e.g. job security and welfare) is one of the factors that influenced devolution, and increasingly called the constitutional viability of the United Kingdom into question.<sup>23</sup>

MPH is symptomatic of certain moral quandaries which the country’s traditional corporatist politics also failed to remedy. In a tamed down form, the prime time *Parkinson* show returned to the issue of labour and creativity in the 1970s when the popular scientist Jacob Bronowski (1908-1974), author and presenter of *The Ascent of Man* was interviewed. Repeated, and shown in full, in the year of Bronowski’s death, Parkinson asked him to describe his idea of utopia. I’m convinced, Bronowski said, ‘that when people are accused of idleness, they are just being accused of hating the humdrum job that doesn’t tax them and they’ve been put into. So I’m convinced that the ideal world for every human being is one in which he or she does a job that they are good at, like doing and gives them satisfaction. That’s my utopia.’<sup>24</sup> What is significant about such broadcasts is the way they expressed a mounting sense of disillusionment with Britain’s industrial base. In one way or another, dark-satanic-mills seemed to have truly consumed the souls of workers and turned them into mere wage slaves. As I am going to show, the same erroneous idea circulated in the arts. This partial view of the politics of pay and conditions gave rise to a heady political mixture of technocracy and Western aesthetics which, in the context of trade union disempowerment, produced what I call techno-spirituality. Like Marx’s view of religion, techno-spirituality is ‘the spirit of a spiritless situation’.<sup>25</sup> Thanks to the good-faith economy the arts have a place

at the head of this movement; the masses of people clad all in white, not to demonstrate but to 'walk', not to criticise but to 'welcome' the G8 to Scotland, is one of its more striking outcomes.

What is at issue here historically is a far reaching socio-economic navigation of culture, hence the voyage I refer to in the chapter title. The destination remains unknown and the effects on the citizens-cum-passengers cannot be overstated. From the 1980s to the 2000s the de-industrialisation of Britain went ahead at an increasingly feverish pace. By 2007 the House of Commons Science and Technology committee was saying that 'policymakers should keep an open mind' on developments such as space tourism until recently thought to be 'a mild form of lunacy.'<sup>26</sup> In a polity which registered significantly earthbound concerns about climate change and environmental sustainability the mandate given for all this was gathered mostly from a little known BBC opinion poll. Seven years later artists funded through The Arts Catalyst, an agency that commissions 'critical' linkages between art and science, had already declared the moon a republic, a 'temporary autonomous zone' and a possible site for radical occupation.<sup>27</sup> The thought experiment was not seen as a mild form of lunacy, or as entertainment.<sup>28</sup> Not for the first time creative play was too serious a business. In this instance there are some good reasons; the key engineering sector protected from de-industrialisation is the armaments business which of course has an interest in political fantasies and economic adventurism. In the 'post-industrial' period, Britain made huge investments in defence and related aerospace ventures when the country's key competitors were focusing on growth areas like electronics and various mundane but vital needs.<sup>29</sup>

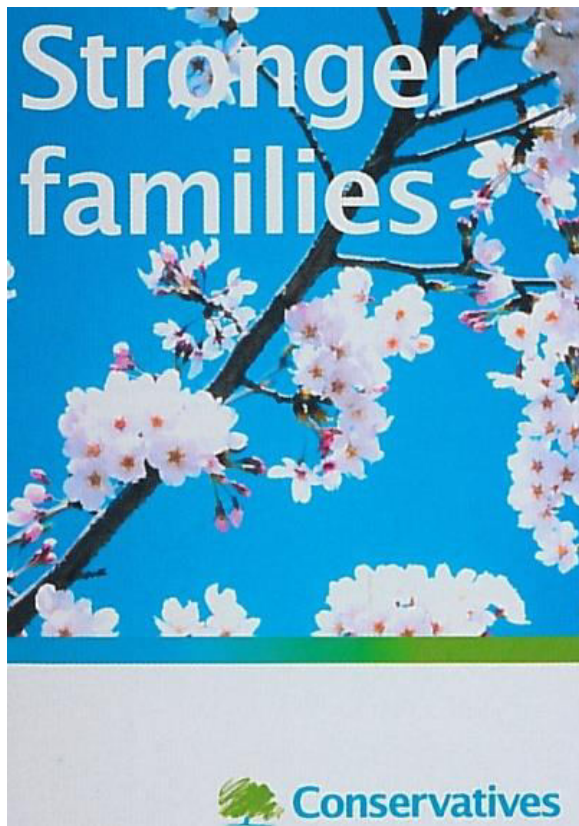
In the much vaunted creative economy the arts have helped cloak conformism to business doctrines which, by Asian standards at least, were clearly failing.<sup>30</sup> Looked at overall, other than advanced weaponry and related technology the British Empire project has not been particularly interested in making things. It has been much more concerned with money-making. Indeed advanced capitalist economies with failed empire projects, e.g. Germany, Italy, Japan, have to make things. By contrast Britain's economy is attached to the crisis-ridden model of US financial imperialism, or 'super-imperialism' as it is also called.<sup>31</sup> The declaration of the moon as a republic, made from an earthbound monarchy, is suggestive of the compensatory role of the arts. In this instance creative play detracts from the real alternatives to the British dream of forever being a world power. Such artistic thought experiments are significant in so far as they are a clue to the actual ideological terrain of the



arts. In the 1970s there was concerted effort to give artists more influence in public management and from then on the arts were set to become increasingly governmental in outlook, even when supposedly ‘critical’ standpoints were adopted.<sup>32</sup> ‘The republic of the moon’ is only mildly symptomatic of the way ideas about art have assisted a particular brand of technocratic politics. This conjuncture reduces the scope of debate at the same time as seeming to open it up. In corporate parlance: blue-sky-thinking. In a nation suffering from the formal imperial trauma of dwindling export markets, the socio-economic quandary had always been whether to go on reproducing and reinforcing inequality, or to follow the example of relatively successful social democracies, particularly in Scandinavia. The history of trade union militancy there — including demands for shorter working hours and supposedly ‘high’ wages — meant that organised equality through welfare rights and education were seen as essential components of the right to national development.<sup>33</sup> No amount of blue-sky thinking really captured these connections for the re-generation of Britain’s economy.

**Figures 5.4 & 5.5**

Blue skies in 2007 Conservative Party election posters. Images from Ball (2011)





### **The (spiritual) aestheticisation of politics**

Until the 1990s public funding ensured that the Bohemian ethos and anti-establishment values could thrive in the arts, but their organisation was all too compatible with the disorganisation of labour; the marketisation of public service; inspirational management and the spirit, if not the letter of the new entrepreneurialism that had come to the fore in the 1980s. Without a “Billy Elliot” type of meta-narrative concerning the role of art in rescuing the social casualties, the renewal of socio-political inequalities in Britain backed up by some of the most repressive anti-labour laws of any developed country could not have been so fully enacted and maintained. By the 1990s strikes in Britain were less prevalent than during the Second World War.<sup>34</sup>

All this hinged on the complex interdependency between aesthetic and political virtues which, from the time of Harold Wilson’s technological ‘revolution’, appear to be caught in a downward spiral; political virtues in the workplace, essential for sustaining the influence of the organised working class, were negated. With the diminishment of that basis for social democracy and welfare, virtues which are important to arts were bound to be negated too. The United Kingdom shows the hallmarks of hollow democracy and aesthetic industrialisation; the stress on ‘good design’ in every area of consumption is just the tip of the iceberg. Clearly discussions of participation in the arts never waned; quite the opposite, as political participation nose-dived — not only in parties and in elections but most importantly in rank and file trade unionism<sup>35</sup> — discussions of participation in the arts ascended in importance. Ideas about cultural participation and creativity were increasingly proffered as the solutions to socio-economic problems.

Despite much talk of right-wing cutbacks the arts in general were supported as much by Tory governments as Labour ones, and sometimes more.<sup>36</sup> The lottery brought in large sums of money which benefited the arts and let off some of the pressure in the politics of progressive taxation.<sup>37</sup> So while the rich were taxed much less, the arts still had a significant role in society while the old political economy of industry was far off-shore in the North Sea, or outsourced, until it was out of sight and largely out of mind. Increasingly the arts became a realm for the expression of political virtues discussed with Toby Lowe in the previous chapter. Thus the conditions came into being for the aestheticisation of politics. In 1936 the German cultural critic Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) first described the phenomenon as a key aspect of fascism in Germany. To preserve property relations and crush the working class the Nazis diverted the desire for economic rights by giving the masses a chance to express

themselves in other ways. According to Benjamin this form of repression could only be sustained in the longer term by going to war.<sup>38</sup> Britain has been almost unceasingly engaged in military action since 1914. Nevertheless the problem with Benjamin's argument is his insistence that although popular culture, particularly cinema, turns the public into critics, they remain deficient 'absent-minded' ones.<sup>39</sup> Given the financial resources pooled in the good-faith economy, and used to encourage grass-roots artistic participation and critical dialogue, if Benjamin is right political virtues in the arts must be subject to some sort of deeper spiritual reform or redirection.

Certainly there is no shortage of evidence to suggest such a heightened meaning. In October 2013 the philosopher and public intellectual Alain de Botton delivered a 'Sunday Sermon' for the School of Life, the 'dogma free' social enterprise he founded in central London.<sup>40</sup> De Botton's subject was 'art as therapy' and his lesson for the day was essentially that the arts are a benign expression of humanity and it is a great thing that 'art is our new religion'.<sup>41</sup> He received rapturous applause from his cosmopolitan audience of free-thinkers. However it is disingenuous to claim this was a dogma-free event. As with most of the great topics of Western liberalism its roots are in revolution and in the still unknown destiny of one in particular. In his *Short History of Ethics* Alasdair MacIntyre (2002) says that since the 18<sup>th</sup> century the doctrine of original sin has been repeatedly implied by conservatives to explain the shortcomings, or failures, of struggles for human emancipation.<sup>42</sup> This is an important insight if one wants to understand the religious status of the arts and the attraction, and lasting influence, of the Schillerian aesthetics and processes of political and social courtship discussed in chapter three.

The venality exposed in the turmoil of the French Revolution was incompatible with Schiller's redemptive vision of societal transformation whereby the discourses of an aesthetically educated, free-thinking, and therefore spiritually noble people, might allow them to rise above the State leaving the latter to wither away.<sup>43</sup> Here aesthetics becomes a precondition for the sort of totally cooperative society imagined later on by anarchists and Marxists, but if there is any one individual to blame for the rose-tinted egalitarian vision based on idealised communication, it is probably Schiller. Given his understandable revulsion during the Reign of Terror in France it is worth comparing Schiller's idealism with that of one of the victims of the revolution, guillotined during the Directory era, Gracchus Babeuf (1760–1797).<sup>44</sup> A keeper of manorial rolls who turned against his noble employers, Babeuf

founded several revolutionary publications, including the *Journal de la liberté de la presse* in 1794. The difference between Schiller's position and that of Babeuf who, to some extent, was a proponent of the violence that horrified Schiller in 1794, could not be more striking. Babeuf and his counterparts insisted in the 1796 *Manifesto of the Equals* that the 'revolution was nothing but a precursor of another revolution, one that will be bigger, more solemn, and which will be the last.' From the same manifesto comes the controversial statement; 'Let all the arts perish, if need be, as long as real equality remains!'<sup>45</sup> Quoting the aristocrat turned revolutionary proponent of egalitarian education, Nicolas de Condorcet (1743-1794), this was 'the final goal of *social art*.' By going from Schiller to Babeuf, we can imagine how two mutually reactive poles of art and equality came into being. Before the existence of organisations which could peacefully, and effectively, articulate proletarian grievances violence helped to propel political and civic virtues towards Schiller's aesthetics.

Nevertheless in Schiller's transvaluation of religious ideas, there is a deep-rooted misrepresentation of political crisis, particularly of the effects of force and counter-force and of the painfully protracted drawing up of social contracts. If seen in the *longue durée* the latter are almost always written in blood. Schiller preferred the American Revolution to the French one but he died before the civil war (1861-1865) which caused more American deaths (an estimated 620,000) than the two 20th century world wars put together. Even with such bloodletting the economic rights promised to African Americans failed to emerge; what was finally realised in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was only their civil rights. So the worst time to measure 'great moments' is probably when they are before our eyes. Given the real costs of what we may call progress it is not surprising that many prefer to conserve the economic order of the day and tolerate inequality rather than face the uncertainties of both coming under attack and unravelling together. Never on these occasions does any one party have a monopoly on the array of virtues, or what Buddhists call 'the eightfold path'; the right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Instead cowardice and opportunism tend to be rife and at least as widely dispersed in society as courage and self-sacrifice. So in line with the doctrine of original sin society as a whole, particularly the State, appears destined to rest in various degrees of sin or wrongfulness.<sup>46</sup> The greater are society's expressions of collectivism especially via the State, the greater its capacity for sin and vice.

Debates about the positions taken in such revolutionary periods continue to inform aesthetic thought today. Like the religious paths to self-emancipation Western aesthetics promises relative shortcuts to a liberty and well-being, accessible in the here and now, without down-payments of blood. Given the popularity of Schillerian ideas, compared to the iconoclastic egalitarianism of a Babeuf, it is not surprising that ideas of civic virtue are propelled towards the arts and it is progressive politics (not only fascist politics as Benjamin saw) which are subject to aestheticisation.

Even those willing to contemplate major structural reforms such as Owen Kelly, a former community artist from the 1970s turned proponent of cultural democracy in the 1980s, have shown a deep suspicion of large-scale State collectivism. In *Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels*, Kelly (1984) portrays the early development of the National Health Service (NHS) as an industrial plot designed to produce consumers.<sup>47</sup> That the NHS may have been turning into that at the time Kelly was writing does not justify the gross simplification of its roots and its political meaning to the post-war generation or to this generation. Here we find the aestheticisation of left-wing politics producing a do-it-yourself attitude, in Kelly's case influenced by thinkers such as the Austrian priest Ivan Illich (1926-2002). What is lost in this approach is one of the single most important problems to overcome if democratic socialism is to have a future. In the words attributed to Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) 'the trouble with socialism is that it takes up too many evenings.'<sup>48</sup> Without large scale collectivism it is very difficult to see a solution to this problem which would not sacrifice equality between citizens. Moreover, if the State is not to be exposed to politically motivated market crises large scale public ownership is still required.

As C.S. Lewis observes, a wide array of religious, artistic and political movements stemmed from a few people 'talking incessantly.'<sup>49</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, left-leaning intellectuals increasingly organised themselves into consultancies and think-tanks like Comedia, which published Kelly's 1984 book. They also joined assorted NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) which helped to form a new technocracy later accused of 'plundering the public sector'.<sup>50</sup> The practical reorganisation of the public service ethos depended on friendship and the who-knows-who factor which moralists such as Lewis have long understood to be a potential threat to the public interest.<sup>51</sup> Comedia founded by Charles Landry, now an international guru of urban planning and beatification, is a good example of the trajectory of this new ethos. Landry is no longer visibly concerned with socialist theory or

economics and Comedia became a 'portal' to his previous collaborative work.<sup>52</sup> The important question at this point is not if the aestheticisation of politics compensates people with time to spare and communications expertise for the lack of equality (which is in fact one way to sustain and reproduce inequality) but rather if technocratic visions of education, work and welfare enjoyed wider support. As with the ideology of the free market — free from certain vices which in fact restrict competition and produce cartels — the greatest problem for ideologues is not converting people to their ideology but getting them to regulate their sense of agency accordingly. Political systems need more than ideology, they need a spirit to mobilise people.

In their very different ways both Macintyre and Lewis want to protect the traditional interplay of virtues that religion claims to foster. Like the Buddhist 'eightfold path', the Western holistic calculation of virtue demands a balancing act and reflection if we are to overcome our preferences and make inconvenient but just decisions. As MacIntyre (1991) points out in his sarcastically titled essay *How to Seem Virtuous Without Actually Being So*, true virtue lies in complex judgments made at difficult times. Similarly for Lewis (1998) in *The Four Loves* Christian dogma was never meant to confirm his 'congenital preference for safe investments and limited liabilities.'<sup>53</sup> Politics only magnifies these difficult calculations of virtue. Under ordinary conditions there is no better example than the risks to livelihood which can be involved in strike action. Gradually, in Britain, the organised working class was stripped not so much of their jobs but of the political capital which was dependent on such a virtuous calculus.<sup>54</sup> Although trade unions made up a huge and infamously bureaucratic social movement which to some demonstrated an abundance of sin, their political muscle was underpinned by some of the principle (Heavenly) virtues of diligence, humility and temperance among relatively small numbers of courageous activists who, like Jimmy Reid, were widely respected in labour circles. Often vilified and comically rebuked in films and on television programmes this cadre went on to suffer widespread defeats in the workplace in the 1980s and 1990s. From then on social democracy was lent support through the equally pivotal Christian virtues of kindness, patience, charity dispersed among the electorate in general.<sup>55</sup> Of course what gives the rhetoric of virtue real meanings are recognisable human qualities. Although these are not confined to any one group the good-faith economy ensures that virtues are not tested in the same way for everyone.

Pierre Bourdieu's sociology would suggest that one of the ways Western aesthetics can supply mere appearances of virtue is that they offer opportunities to rather ostentatiously reject the stick and carrot ethics which capitalism appears to encourage.<sup>56</sup> In the arts the material wealth and rewards the rest of society strives for do not have the quite same meaning and European aesthetics has implied, if not demanded, certain sacrifices at the altar of art. Suffice it to say here that when the spiritual aristocracy born from the arts and letters disavows the struggle for conventional rewards like money or ordinary status symbols, they are rejecting rewards which correspond to the vices of greed, envy and even wrath. And these are the sins we saw Kenneth Williams lay at the door of trade unionists. The seeming obscurity and moral opaqueness in our discussions of virtue is rooted only in self-denials of lingering cosmologies which, if one follows MacIntyre arguments about the doctrine of original sin might be harder to erase than a genuinely holistic calculus of virtue.

Among the left-leaning people in the arts interviewed for this study few could be called enthusiastic supporters of the actually existing collectivism of trade unions. For most trade unionism looks like an alien planet and some who wished to remain anonymous were forthright in their condemnation. With the possible exception of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) unions were seen by most as backward or irrelevant and at worst a bureaucratic police force deployed against a genuine social consciousness.<sup>57</sup> In many instances and at different levels trade unions may well be these things, but the political-moral issue, both on the inside and the outside of unions, is whether they are thought to be redeemable and a key to a realistic democracy, or are they captives of the vices which European aesthetics promise to transcend?<sup>58</sup> What should be apparent from the historical sketch above, is that the soft power of political aestheticisation involves moral standpoints; and these are more complex than the project Benjamin analysed in the 1930s to incorporate the masses within a national war policy. At least as important to consider are religiously influenced discourses of virtuous, non-violent, social agency which invite the assistance of the good-faith economy. In the British case as political action at the level of national and international economic structures became a reserved area, only accessible to a business friendly oligarchy, people in the arts turned towards the perceived political benefits and virtues of localism.

### **From scale to space and the rise of localism**

In the mid to late 1960s it became known that the CIA was indirectly supporting writers and

artists which the intelligence agency identified belonging to the 'non-communist-left'; their funding was part of the geo-political strategy of United States against the Soviet Union and other communist nations.<sup>59</sup> The revelations seriously damaged the reputation of non-aligned socialists in the arts and letters.<sup>60</sup>

Especially unflattering for the left-wingers who had become better-fed and better-known as result of CIA support was one of its foundational arguments that paying 'reds' to do art was a good way to stop them doing anything more risky.<sup>61</sup> Some were to commit suicide when the operation was exposed.<sup>62</sup> Western aesthetics went into a mood of self-denial and by the 1970s the way was open for post-modernism to become intellectual orthodoxy. Later the terminology of 'appropriation', 'liminality' and 'ambiguity' would come into vogue in every self-respecting art school. This crisis of confidence beginning in the late 1960s, was the historical context when art's participatory mission to communities took off and the anti-Stalinist intellectual left was granted a new lease of life. In the early 1970s the Arts Council set up new committees and issued reports on experimental community arts and in 1972 the client organisation, the Association of Community Artists, was founded. By the early 1980s the playwright John McGrath was arguing that *localism* was one of the most important means of straddling left-wing political aesthetics and popular culture.<sup>63</sup>

Others writing in the period provide a host of reasons for scaling artistic projects down to manageable proportions where results might be seen, and analysed. In this period Su Braden's 1978 book *Artists and People* argues that British industrialism 'forced many people into a mould more suited to machine components which will fit neatly into their designated slots than to human beings who can think for themselves.'<sup>64</sup> The main question was not how art still came out of such apparently de-humanised situations but rather how new contexts are created in which artistic and social creativity could flourish and transform everyday life. This was 'art for social change.'<sup>65</sup> Braden draws on a Marxian analysis of culture, and she recognises that large scale material considerations, such as the structures of child care, public space and institutional relations of patronage were just as important to examine critically as artists' practices. However the localisation of artistic projects also meant that social developments could be made into a more manageable object of analysis. This meant that artistic interventions began to take on some of the characteristics of social science.

In the words of David Harding 'the context is half the work'. [**Appendix I**] One of the placements Braden discusses is Harding's 1968 permanent appointment as an artist to the

new town of Glenrothes in Fife. This, and other examples of artistic social practices, discussed by Braden influenced the careers of project organisers such as Esther Salamon. **[Appendix II]** Salamon was one of the countless organisers eager to put critical understandings of art into a political practice albeit not one directly aligned to any political party. In the sphere of culture during the Cold War both Harding and Salamon belonged to something roughly equivalent to the non-aligned countries. Significantly both were drawn to anarchist writings. Despite the municipal scandals of the time, local politics looked relatively transparent, or at least knowable, compared to the geopolitics of the arts and letters.

As a teacher Harding always advised his students to ‘first identify your politician’, a lesson he took from his immersion in local government in Labour run Glenrothes. Salamon came to Labour’s old industrial stronghold of Newcastle from Bath. Others, ‘committed to regionalism’ like the students who founded the Amber Film Collective, came from London in 1969.<sup>66</sup> Unlike the later generation at Helix Arts in Newcastle, Salamon and Fairley organised some art projects which were linked to trade union and workplace experiences – a linkage Braden and others at the time were promoting. In one instance what began as an arts project in a laundry turned into a unionisation campaign. Helix arranged residencies for artists, writers, photographers and playwrights in everything from hospitals, social service institutions and the police to breweries, steelworks, dockyards, and defence systems companies. The experience was supposed to change art and artists, as well as the context of their practices.

It should be a surprise that in Braden’s 1978 account of industrialism the struggle for industrial democracy is entirely absent. With the shop stewards movement and the government publication of the Bullock Report in 1977 this was the burning national issue of the decade. Yet Braden’s book offers no strategic debate about where people in the arts might situate themselves in relation to the nation’s trade union politics, the scale of the disputes, and whether anything could really be achieved from the sidelines. Only a general sense of artists aligning themselves with the labour movement is suggested as another way of making art more accessible to mass participation.<sup>67</sup> Braden does not offer an appraisal of unions in the arts such as Equity, the National Musicians Union or the Society of Authors, a professional association which calls itself a union. Nor is there a discussion of the short lived attempt to democratise the Arts Council by Hugh Jenkins, the former Equity official and Minister for the Arts between 1974 and 1976, (mentioned in chapter one).<sup>68</sup> Like many other writers of the



time, Braden's approach inadvertently distances the artist from society although she intends to do the opposite.

Undoubtedly an abstract sense of alienated industrial labour influenced the thinking of artists, teachers and organisers in the 1970s. Braden helped to pass it on in print to the next generation. Consequently key practical issues of education, work and welfare, (not least working hours) are nearly obliterated. Although critical of art as a new religion she adopts the tone of a Schillerian high priest using a quotation from Jean Duvignaud's 1972 *Sociology of Art*. In Duvignaud's words 'Art becomes a wager on the capacity of human beings to invent new relationships and to experience hitherto unknown emotions...'<sup>69</sup> In this manner Braden poses artistic autonomy as an alternative to industrialism that supposedly halts critical thought. Yet it was industry which had produced the radical collectivism that artists' so often appeared to want but patently lacked. Moreover the bleak view of industrialism was to overlap with interests of post-industrial systems theorists whom I will come to in more detail later on. Arguably, if art workers had not been on a mission to 'invent new relationships' in communities, and in other people's workplaces, they might have learnt more from the struggles within national trade unions.

In the mid-1980s the community arts began to be called into question especially by publications from Comedia. Kelly's 1984 book was followed in 1985 by *What a Way to Run a Railroad* by Landry *et al.* Beginning with a list of the numerous closures of left-wing cultural organisations, the authors argued for a new 'radical political economy' dependent on 'self-exploitation' among idealistic people who were 'young, single without major financial commitments.'<sup>70</sup> The main justification given for this was the apparent willingness of people to give their energy and time to left-wing political parties. They also argued that libertarian left-wingers had mistakenly opposed the efficiency benefits of industrial organisation.<sup>71</sup> Instead of 'sneering' at management, new psychologically integrative management thinking needed to be taken seriously.<sup>72</sup> At the level of counter-cultural organisation an obsession with political ethics had overtaken the need to win, a party-political imperative the authors prematurely identified with Neil Kinnock.<sup>73</sup> Given these criticisms about the impoverished state of left-leaning culture one might have expected a renewed interest in trade unionism, but these authors were already positioned as critical onlookers and political consultants for the voluntary sector. Nor are the supposedly apolitical terms of public funding of culture really questioned, although this had long concealed an actual lack of democratic accountability.

With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is possible to see that trust has been redirected in Britain's political economy in line with American business theory. What financialisation really meant was that enormous faith was placed in finance capitalism at the top; and trust in decision making further down was steadily withdrawn through monetary discipline. Given the disastrous results of this evolution the sneering sceptics appear to have been right. Despite their not unjustified criticisms of the community arts and their interest in cultural democracy, it is noteworthy that Comedia's analysts such as Kelly and Landry *et al* failed to consider the history of unionisation in the arts as a potential key to cultural democracy. Even when calling on community artists to follow the example of the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards who questioned the basis of production and struggled to turn a weapons factory over to the production of life-sustaining products, Kelly recommended artists to keep their distance from the industrial ethos.<sup>74</sup> He looked forward to a network society and a type of associational democracy.<sup>75</sup>

Most attempts at unionisation in the arts and literature have not followed a radical organising model; rather they have been run along the lines of partnership/servicing models, typified by low membership involvement, and a feeble engagement with the wider labour movement. These missed opportunities correspond to the conditions in 'the mind industry' criticised by the German political writer and poet, Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Before culture and creativity were explicitly targeted by governments as key components of a new industrialism Enzensberger (1982) criticised what he calls the industrialisation of the mind.<sup>76</sup> He points out the paradox that this highly diffused industrialisation depends on a peculiarly modern belief in intellectual autonomy.<sup>77</sup> One of the great vanities of people who are subjects of this form of industrialisation, and who may make a living observing the influence of industrial society on others, is that more often than not they do not see these influences operating on themselves.<sup>78</sup> This insight goes some way to explaining why new capitalist management and self-exploitation could be lauded by left-wing intellectuals. Nevertheless, as discussed above, the exposure of Cold War cultural geopolitics meant that a 'shadow of suspicion' fell on everything that might have drawn support from the intelligence agencies and this surely played a part in an ill-timed revival of localism, just as the working class were about to experience the impacts of globalisation.<sup>79</sup> This needs to be examined at the grass-roots.

### **Artistic instrumentalism from below**

In the 1990s “Blairism” lent a persona to the Labour Party’s long-standing search for a social-democratic consensus that would not depend on the un-predictable weapon of workers’ militancy. Although founded in 1900 as an attempt to conserve the strike weapon which, of course, saps the strength of strikers and their families, the leaders of the Labour Party have often been accused of repressing trade union influence. Harold Wilson is perhaps the most interesting example. In appealing to people with ‘talent’ in 1963, Wilson subtly managed to disavow militancy in the famous conference speech where he spoke of the white-heat-of-technological-revolution. In Wilson’s all-embracing vision virtually all the tasks of revolutionising Britain’s internal socio-economic relations and its role in world affairs were to be captured by a new cross-class commitment to knowledge and technology. Reassuringly, only those capitalists who were genuinely patriotic and forward thinking would have a part to play. The speech was given to a party divided on the unresolved matters of principle which were forestalling a coherent standpoint on education, socio-economic justice and the combined issues of national and international development along non-imperialist lines. Wilson seemed to hit all the right chords with the notion of technological revolution.<sup>80</sup>

Wilson was elected prime minister for the first time the following year and went on to win three more elections until his unexpected resignation from office in 1976. By then it had become clear that the matters of principle he was accused of betraying did matter politically, and that the rhetoric of technological revolution was no answer to Labour’s fence-sitting dilemmas in domestic and foreign policy. But what Wilson had set in course by this time was the re-invention of the whole labour movement from above. One of the greatest political costs was the increasing isolation of trade unionism from society. The arts began to fill the gap. However I argue here that it would be a mistake to think that this brand of political entryism came only from the graduates of universities and art schools; it also came from the grass-roots.

The way art and politics have spoken to each other under the influence of Wilson’s technological revolution is evident in the case of the Craigmillar Festival Society (CFS); one of the most important beacons of community arts in Britain. The CFS was formally constituted in 1967 but the roots of the organisation go back to the early 1960s. It was established in a neglected and little visited area of Edinburgh where the mining and brewing industries had declined sharply. However, in the 1970s, with the assistance of government job creation schemes and European Poverty Action funding, the CFS gained a place on the

political map.<sup>81</sup> The European funding helped to establish a power base and a semi-independent welfare system for local people. As well as running more than fifty neighbourhood projects, the CFS employed around 700 people at its height, although often on very low pay. The degree fiscal independence enjoyed by the organisation generated a certain amount of animosity within Edinburgh Labour Party which over the years had made significant concessions to unfolding neoliberal policies. In this context, the CFS increasingly appeared to be a proud vestige of “old Labour.” However, even if this was the case, the allegiances were largely transformed into the idea of the arts as a catalyst for social change and the shortcomings of old Labour and the Wilson era were forgotten. Although the CFS collapsed in 2002 and Craigmillar would be cleared of most of its population, the organisation still provides a model of social change whereby the arts and artists appear to achieve things hitherto achieved by people and politics.

Known to some of its critics as ‘the Labour Party in disguise’ the CFS has been largely defined by one of its main founders and movers, Helen Crummy (1920-2011), who was the local party secretary.<sup>82</sup> Crummy’s account given in her 1992 memoir, *Let the People Sing* has been taken up widely and one part of it often repeated. Accordingly, the motivation for founding the CFS came around 1962 after her young son, Philip, was refused violin lessons by the local school. In so many words the headmaster and teachers insisted to Crummy that a musical education was a luxury the under-achieving children of the area could not afford. Crummy and other working class parents, particularly mothers, took up the issue. At the time Labour had stated their commitment to comprehensive schools and to the creation of a fully egalitarian education system. Given this policy it should be surprising that Crummy and others explained the refusal to give music lessons in the local school as the impetus for organising the alternative that became the CFS. Indeed Angus Lyall, the local headmaster, an opponent of Labour Party education policy, even became an ally in Crummy’s efforts. She writes ‘a mutual respect’ developed between them following a formal debate on education policy held at the school in which Lyall lost the motion to Crummy.<sup>83</sup> Given her obvious success in taking up the education issue why did she choose a different agenda? <sup>84</sup>

Crummy died before I could request an interview with her for this study. But at least part of the answer can be found in her memoir. The founding of the CFS shows all the internal contradictions of the labour movement, not least in matters of gender. In Crummy’s words ‘Politics (with a capital P) seemed to be the province of men.’<sup>85</sup> On the basis of her writings

alone it may well be argued that the development of CFS compensated Crummy and many others for the shortcomings of the British labour movement. Describing the period running up to her encounter with the discretionary powers in the school system Crummy tells of an equally frustrating rebuttal. Crummy had been both a frustrated housewife and a keen reader. She responded to both these conditions when she took up a trade union correspondence course in English and creative writing in her husband's name. Unfortunately this mild deception was uncovered by a union official who turned up at Crummy's front door. She writes: 'My secret was out. The course was stopped and I was left with great vacuum in my life and feeling of desolation and frustration which I probably vented on the family.'<sup>86</sup> This important aspect of Crummy's story has been passed over in subsequent published accounts though it certainly influenced Crummy's subsequent actions.

Crummy resolved to join the school mothers' club. Essentially, what eventually became the Craigmillar Festival Society was born from the frustrations among that group of women with their children's education. Clearly Crummy was able to articulate these feelings very well. Yet with the memory of the 1951 Festival of Britain still alive in Labour circles, and as an answer to the official Edinburgh Festival, the idea of mounting a 'People's Festival' was an attractive course of action. Not surprisingly the women were given encouragement to go in that direction. It was not a difficult choice. The alternative was to head against the tide of Wilson's high-end technological revolution which downgraded basic egalitarian policies for education. Moreover the possibilities for social movement trade unionism were being forestalled; partly because there was no question of the labour movement leading the way in Wilson's revolution. It seemed the best that local parties and unions could do was to keep up.

All this lent greater weight to the deadening bureaucratic ethos which Crummy experienced at the hands of her husband's union. Nevertheless the experience dramatised in the film *Made in Dagenham* (2010) helps put these points in perspective.<sup>87</sup> In 1968, during the Wilson era, women workers in the Ford car plant at Dagenham went against the grain of a trade union patriarchy when they went on strike for equal pay. Thanks to their place in the production chain they eventually won, and in 1970 the Equal Pay Act was introduced. Crummy's story can be read as the very opposite played out in the reproduction of inequality in so far as it hinges on a retreat from trade union and State structures. An opportunity for challenging the union system and the school system was passing.

The battle which Crummy and other working class people in Craigmillar chose to stage in the name of a People's Festival is evocative of the technocratic political discourses developing at the time. Crummy was acquiring the skills to win some ground here and challenge what she saw as politics with a capital P. In doing so she helped bring the arts into the political frame in a way which lit a beacon for left-leaning artists and intellectuals, and equally significantly, for some social psychologists of the time who were interested in systems theory. For these reasons it is worth quoting her at length when she addressed Edinburgh University academics in the late 1960s.

*Sirs I am sent by the people of Craigmillar to say that we are sick and tired of being the fodder for this university and other institutions' surveys. All too often, all your findings do is demean the area and cause further social damage. You forget it is people's lives you are dealing with. We have had enough! If necessary some of us will resort to lies when presented by one of your questionnaires. We also strongly object to some of the personal and patronising questions you ask. So we give notice, that unless the community requests a survey which we are convinced will be used for the good of the area, unless we have some say and control over the way the findings are used, no longer will we co-operate. And we mean it! In fact we will go out of our way to sabotage if necessary!*<sup>88</sup>

As with her improved relations with her local headmaster, Crummy's powerful address helped form a partnership between the CFS and Edinburgh academics. Compared to the cryptic surveys and the dismal academic representation of Craigmillar the means and ends of the People's Festival were bright: to be a shop window for local talent; to give children pride and an understanding of local history; to put down roots; and to improve the image of Craigmillar. Although laudable none of these objectives necessarily opposed the emergence of a technocracy which, by definition, was devoted to increased socio-economic efficiency without fundamentally disturbing the distribution of power in society.

From the 1970s on, Crummy and her supporters in CFS argued with increasing passion that the arts were a *catalyst* of community development. Others in the CFS such as the former city councillor, Paul Nolan, saw things differently. Nolan was born in Craigmillar in 1950 to a family with 19<sup>th</sup> century Irish roots. Given the more recent clearance of Craigmillar's population it is significant that when I interviewed him in 2012 he told me he still only lives a hundred yards from the house in Craigmillar his family moved into in 1958. He describes himself as 'a jazz man' and 'unapologetically old Labour.' He points out that the CFS organisation was modelled on the local authority structure. For better or worse it was

ordinary politics that counted most he argues. 'The arty thing was the fun thing' Nolan says. He enjoyed the creative projects and helped make a prize-winning film but from his perspective, Crummy's ideas about the catalytic impact of the arts was 'utter fantasy' which muddled the real workings of power and replaced reasoned argument with a stream of anecdotal evidence. Despite his fairly severe differences between Crummy, Nolan's loyalty to the CFS endured.

As Nolan suggests it would be a mistake to believe the CFS was simply an arts organisation. When I worked as a community photographer for the organisation in the early 1980s, my own impression was that the arts were the icing on the cake; on a day to day basis the CFS catered for basic needs. Nationalists and others who saw it as a political organisation in disguise were right, but wrong to think it was merely the Labour party underneath. The politics of the CFS corresponded to all that could not be contained by the Labour party or the trade union structures of the time, while at the same time it showed dependency on the (dwindling) political capital of the working class movement. As a professional dramatist John McGrath recognised *variety* and *immediacy* as keys to popular performance. His 7:84 company often produced those qualities, theatrically, for the benefit of the labour movement. It can be said that in its operations the CFS offered variety and immediacy in real life.<sup>89</sup> Judy Greenwood, Craigmillar's community psychiatrist between 1978 and 1987 describes the CFS as a therapeutic organisation that kept people out of hospitals. It was 'community psychiatry at its best'.<sup>90</sup> Greenwood's claim may be valid, but the reason Nolan gives for abandoning his arguments with Crummy about overstating the social impact of the arts is equally telling; he was fed up with being sent off by Crummy to see the psychiatrist.<sup>91</sup>

Given these mixed readings the most interesting difference between the standpoints of Crummy and Nolan goes right to the heart of class politics. The question Nolan asks is why should the working class not be entitled to the arts for their own sake, why should art be instrumentalised? One possible response is that it would be naive to think the arts are not already instruments for the ruling class, especially if one recalls the patronage of European aesthetic philosophy in the 18th century discussed in chapter three. Another response, more in line with Nolan's point, is that art for sheer pleasure looks again like a luxury the poor are told they can't afford. If they can afford it — in terms of access and costs — it is probably not what their betters really count as art. It is the wrong pictures, the wrong books, the wrong films, the wrong music, and ultimately, the wrong culture. Therefore the poorer you are the more your subsidised pleasures must be justified as contributions to social well-being.

### **‘Freedom in a rocking boat’**

The multi-faceted social functions of the CFS gave the organisation local credibility and also made it a valuable example to Eric Trist (1909-1993), a social psychologist and one of the founders of the Tavistock Institute, working on social-systems theory. This theoretical frame centres on the problematic relationships between workers and the structures of employment. Some of Trist’s anti-bureaucratic ideas about industrial democracy have been taken up in Scandinavia.<sup>92</sup> In Norway both workers and employers were already moulding anti-bureaucratic ideas to suit their opposing interests in the class struggle. The conflict was formally enshrined there as a pillar of democratic society.<sup>93</sup> But in Britain, suffering from its imperial industrial burdens and an increasingly disempowered trade union movement, the same ideas appear to have added strength to political corporatism rather than weakening it. Where social movement trade unionism might have developed as in Norway, in Britain numerous weaker and highly professionalised or governmental initiatives came into play; reinforcing the mood of working class defeat.

The defeats suffered by the trade union movement in Britain were not confined to Margaret Thatcher’s (1925-2013) spell as Prime Minister, nor were they due to a lack of self-confidence on the part of the organised working class. Arguably they were connected to institutionalised hubris, often based on a lack of interest in the grass-roots development of rank and file trade unionism. This ideology was encouraged by Harold Wilson’s increasingly opportunistic political twists and turns in domestic and foreign policy.<sup>94</sup> It was an important period because Wilson’s ‘revolution’ began a process whereby different cultural attributes, class-interests and social problems would be subsumed by various mastering discourses as the instability of the post-industrial vessel became more apparent.

Today one of the most persuasive proponents of the social impact of the arts is the researcher and consultant François Matarasso, a former Comedia associate and an influential voice in the rationalisation of Helix’s projects discussed with Toby Lowe in the previous chapter. Matarasso is among the advocates of artistic social engagement who, in the 1990s and 2000s, were ideologically flexible enough to join everything together so that the arts appear as a catalyst for social change. In an echo of Wilson’s all-encompassing revolution Matarasso sees participation in the arts as a crucial route to self-confidence, employability, organisational creativity, urban renewal, ecological understanding, democratic participation, and more.<sup>95</sup> Although Matarasso is concerned with struggles for recognition; for whom or



what is as unclear as any attempt to construct 'identity politics out of thin air'.<sup>96</sup> Although the arts are envisaged as something that can have an 'impact' on communities and society this can be better understood as community impact in the arts, in so far as it seeks to deliver the sort of multi-dimensional benefits that could be dreamed up in a day of communitarian brainstorming.<sup>97</sup> Here it is worth reading Matarasso's own words.

*Peoples' stories show the arts' distinctive offer and its unique opportunities and benefits. They can enable people to reflect on, interpret, recreate and share their experiences in deeply meaningful ways. (...) They tell stories, create images and explore ideas. They are how a community talks to itself and to others — and communities or people who are silenced do not participate.*<sup>98</sup>

Does participation in the arts mean that people who are 'silenced' gain a voice, or that silenced people simply cannot participate in the arts? Beyond the distinctive vagueness of such claims there is a raft of legislation which restricts effective protest and silences a variety of unsightly sentiments which fall into the category of hate speech.<sup>99</sup> What is worth stressing here is that liberal-minded utterances such as Matarasso's above do not necessarily correspond with real liberties, especially positive liberties.<sup>100</sup>

Goals which advocates of the arts see today are anticipated and problematised more clearly in Emery and Trist's (1972) *Towards a Social Ecology*; and in the work of another post-industrial systems theorist, the war hero and public administrator Sir Geoffrey Vickers (1894-1982), author of *Freedom in a Rocking Boat* (1970). These rather high-minded technocrats were interested in the creation of socio-technical systems that would replace 'industrial-technical-administrative' systems which, more or less, viewed individuals as replaceable parts.<sup>101</sup> By contrast the socio-technical systems of 'post-industrialism' would need to fit people into a structure that made sense to them. Theoretically, the feedback from one to the other ought to bring structure and agency into a more perfect alignment. Thinking this through presented Emery and Trist (1972) with a 'meta-problem' which required holistic futurological examination as spelt out in the subtitle of their book, a 'contextual appreciation of the future in the present.'<sup>102</sup>

Viewed from the early 1970s the future society closely corresponds to the present one where networks appear to increase opportunities. This holds out certain promises but largely at the expense of values engendered during the earlier imperial phase which Emery and Trist describe merely as 'industrial society'. The present society promises 'self-actualisation' as opposed to 'achievement', 'self-expression' as opposed to 'self-control', 'inter-dependence'

as opposed to ‘independence’ and ‘joy’ as opposed to ‘endurance’.<sup>103</sup> What is substituted in each example here are values and virtues nurtured by British imperialism. In the eyes of Emery and Trist the new modalities blurred the boundaries between work and play; they were potentially incredible and terrifyingly trivial at the same time. For Vickers (1970) the success of this ‘self-exciting system’, would hinge on information technology and consumer sovereignty — a ‘paradise for the economic man.’<sup>104</sup> Yet in quite accurately foreseeing a society that would enjoy an enormous expansion of shopping thanks to electronic communications, Vickers also recognised threats to political legitimacy. He associated this with a ‘post-liberal era’ in which the role of protest *and* the legitimacy of protest might not be preserved.<sup>105</sup> He warned that if they break together the conditions of civil war would be present.<sup>106</sup> While the arts may be used to enshrine protest, the actual functions of protest can be suppressed. Of course Britain is not in a state of civil war, but the continued existence of the United Kingdom has been questioned as never before. In the society which psychological systems theorists foresaw, networks do not reach collectively binding political decisions at best they create joint voluntary actions.

Despite their practical candour Vickers (1970) and Emery and Trist (1972) wrote as futurological utopians. They were not concerned with revolutionising the political economy of the time and were instead forecasting its effects on the future. In many ways the technocratic analysis paved the way for what I have called techno-spirituality. This active discourse is *technical* because the ultimate direction and meaning of the socio-technical system seems less susceptible to a holistic moral calculus (of the type often derived from a mixture of religious and political ideas), and at the same time it is *spiritual* in intention. The whole psychological self is defined by the passion and talents which supposedly allow people to find their niche in a personalised industrial system. No doubt the spectacle of the physical transformation of production over the last thirty years distracted from what was most important about so-called post-industrialism, but it was perfectly stated in 1981 by Margaret Thatcher; ‘Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul’.<sup>107</sup>

This spiritual project owes a great deal to European aesthetics, but before examining this linkage further it is worth pointing out that it is not easy to see how art and politics meet in systems theory. We need to remember the sort of discussion transcribed at the outset of this chapter, particularly the ideas about the maladjusted labour and the need for creativity. Compared to goods and services, Vickers thought that money and commodity markets had

‘an astonishing degree of technical perfection’ and ‘an important distributive function.’<sup>108</sup> By accepting such a glowing prognosis it is not surprising that Emery and Trist looked forward to professionally-designed financial services that would provide people with both the flexibility and the security to counteract the risks of a more free-floating globalised economy.<sup>109</sup> In this sense finance capitalism would help liberate creativity from the straightjacket of employment. Although characteristically silent about Britain’s imperial role as a support act for *Pax Americana*, there can be no doubt these post-industrial visionaries took the idea of public service seriously and their writings embody the ethos — *positively* in a sociological and philosophical depth which compares favourably with today’s consultancies and think-tanks, and *negatively* in the rather studied political naivety that passes for impartiality and objectivity in the sphere of management discourse. On its own the same apparent independence of mind was a poor line of defence against the full-scale commercialisation that can be summed up in the letters UK PLC.

The experience of economic precarity today makes the errors of judgement in Vickers (1970) and Emery and Trist (1972) obvious. In the wake of financial meltdowns brought about by the technically accelerated speculation (estimated by its critics to account for up to 98% of the international economy) many defenders of finance capitalism refuse to guarantee any end to the convulsive spiral which accounts for massive upward distributions of wealth.<sup>110</sup> Instead of interdependency, British citizens are frequently reminded of their dependency on the success of finance capitalism and the necessity of what is effectively socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor.

Unlike the *ancien regime* this order is not especially supported by organised and established religion so much as the so called feel-good-factor. However this may only be the flip side of what one of the interviewees in this study, the Nigerian émigré Femi Folorunso, says is ‘the feudalism of the soul’ which bedevils his homeland thanks to the long standing Anglo-American encouragement of comprador capitalism there.<sup>111</sup> Janet Rodriguez and Oscar Sottillo, two other anti-imperialists interviewed in Venezuela, find it remarkable that the British left has little to say about the role of the British monarchy. These perspectives from Africa and Latin America resonate with Emery and Trist’s view that ‘post-industrial values actually represent retrievals, rediscoveries of pre-industrial values which have been diminished or lost (...)’.<sup>112</sup> Although the Craigmillar Festival Society was rooted in egalitarian politics it should be remembered that community level organising often gains the aristocratic seal of approval, and the CFS was no different in this respect.<sup>113</sup> In some ways Gordon Baron

of Prestoungrange has taken up the mantle of the CFS in supporting community tapestry projects with Andrew Crummy, one of Helen Crummy's sons.<sup>114</sup> With very few exceptions organised labour and egalitarian education are modern matters which are still alien to the interest of the 'enlightened' nobility.

Education is one of the areas where the organisation of equality matters most. Matarasso thinks the promises of art are very similar to those of education and that both are easily corrupted.<sup>115</sup> However education and the arts are not equivalents; the arts defuse what is at stake in the politics of education. When faced with the denial of violin lessons at her son's school, Helen Crummy turned to arts organisation with great sincerity but such discretionary powers in school system represent much more than the failure to offer a musical education to everyone. A more recent example which also shows how the Schillerian discourse of *aesthetic education* comes to take the place of the large issue of *educational equality* can be found in the activity of Sir Ken Robinson, chair of the committee which produced the 1999 government report, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture, and Education* (NACCCE 1999). With "education education education" being the New Labour government mantra at the time, the terms of reference given to Robinson committee were generous; to 'take stock of current provision and to make proposals for principles, policies and practice'.<sup>116</sup> While the report speaks of a problematic 'climate' dogging the British education system, its authors fail to pin this down. Despite its generous remit allowing consideration of long standing matters of principle, they studiously avoid a discussion of equality even when speaking about the unhelpful 'dichotomies' that impinge on a coherent national educational strategy.

Long gone are the days that 'clowns must stay clowns.' As if one comic would not be enough, the committee which produced the Robinson Report included both Dawn French and Lenny Henry — two well known comedians who were husband and wife at the time. Looking rather like an example of the new cronyism it is not surprising that the Robinson committee buried the issue of equality. Unseen in its report is any suggestion of the problems of allowing education to remain a social enterprise for the rich.<sup>117</sup> Robinson wants to 'eliminate the existing hierarchy of subjects' but says nothing against the institutional hierarchy.<sup>118</sup> By 2014 the Con-Dem coalition government was taking up the ideological slack left behind by Robinson and New Labour. The education minister Michael Gove spoke of dismantling a 'Berlin Wall' between public and private schools — code for the sort of financialisation and part-privatisation of the state services already underway in the National Health Service.<sup>119</sup>

It is all the more significant that Robinson comes from a working-class Liverpool family, yet he helped pave the way for what may turn out to be the financialisation of a key social democratic structure in Britain. Robinson, an academic turned hi-level consultant, is a very able critic of the tailoring of education systems to the outdated needs of industrial production. Since the 1999 report Robinson has gone on to argue persuasively for reforms to bring out the creative potential of individuals. He defines creativity 'as the process of having ideas that have value'.<sup>120</sup> He points to the highly rated and highly praised Finnish education system for its small classes, lack of testing and generally anti-bureaucratic ethos, but is silent about the outlawing of private education in Scandinavia.<sup>121</sup> As a public intellectual working among middle class audiences, Robinson delivers blows to the old industrial system, pointing out its socio-economic damages with a comic touch. At the time of writing, Robinson's 2006 presentation, *Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity*, is reportedly the most watched TED talk ever.<sup>122</sup> In another public lecture in 2011, this time a Sunday Sermon for Alain de Botton's free-thinking School of Life, Robinson draws on the American scholarly supporter of myth Joseph Campbell (1904-1987). In doing so Robinson articulates the vital moral dimension of techno-spirituality. It may be heard here as an echo of all that is supposedly wrong with trade union solidarity:

*When you follow your interests, when you connect with your own true energy, your life takes a different path, new people come in to it (...) new opportunities are created, you affect their lives and they affect your lives, it's a process of reciprocity... it's something Joseph Campbell said, I mean his expression is about 'following your bliss', but he means the same thing essentially, which is that if you do that opportunities open up that weren't there before and that other people wouldn't have had, because this is your life that is opening up.*<sup>123</sup>

Robinson's statement about the reciprocal sharing of opportunities is a powerful expression of the entrepreneurial spirit and the synthetic solidarity which gives it meaning. That is to say it is the opposite of an active solidarity based on the sharing of risks to one's livelihood. In English, the depth of feeling about lack of reciprocity in this matter of workers' solidarity is still summed up in the word *scab*. Robinson offers a completely different moral calculus and sense of virtue from that of honouring difficult collective decisions. When Kenneth Williams, a comic being deadly serious, made his second appearance on *Parkinson* in 1973 he was faced with a vocal audience. His 'superman' argument concerning dedication to work seemed even more controversial as it became apparent that he wanted to avoid the structural issues which mean that a section of British society uses 'choice' to preserve fundamental structural inequalities in the education system. Robinson, a serious writer and intellectual who also tries

to amuse, espouses a very similar discourse of dedication and creativity. However, today this meets with much greater acclaim and can be made to appear quite uncontroversial.

The recommendation to ‘think imperially’ was crucial in drawing colonial subjects away from their collective interest, and towards that of their imperial masters.<sup>124</sup> Thinking as an imperial subject is a very unpopular idea in a world of supposedly independent sovereign nations. More so, perhaps, because the most militarised nation on earth, the USA, is very reluctant to acknowledge a ‘super-imperial’ project.<sup>125</sup> Equally unsightly in today’s world are the missionary projects associated with the old imperialism, those devoted to converting people to the belief in a single all powerful God. Despite *his* omnipotence the more we know about human history the more God appears like a negligent and dysfunctional parent, a philosophical and ethical problem which defenders of religion such as C.S. Lewis, Alasdair MacIntyre or Terry Eagleton seem hard pushed to answer.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless the important issues they raise about the calculation of virtue pose the key question of what we are becoming? The issue is as applicable to a political economy as the individual.<sup>127</sup> In place of these ethical questions techno-spirituality offers an altogether more amenable cult of autonomy. The technocratic thinkers of the 1970s looked for social efficiencies and improvements within the terms of existing economic hierarchy of powers; this deferential approach defines them as technocrats. However by drawing on the arts, technocracy gains a historical and spiritual dimension it lacks. With the assistance of the good-faith economy techno-spirituality is manifested with increasing theatrical verve; and it promises to be nothing less than the belief system propagated by the bourgeoisie internationally.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter shows some of the ways educational inequality was maintained and institutionalised in Britain, and how it actually advanced through technocratic discourses of the arts and creativity. A bourgeois vision of boredom and alienation in industry lent support to a left-wing artistic discourse which was increasingly sociological in tone and politically alienated from industrial democracy. This set the stage in the arts for a discursive courtship with technocracy which would invite greater support from the good-faith economy. As the next chapter examines, the deficiencies of State education are still a justification for artistic instrumentalism; but increasingly from above, instead of the grass roots.

This chapter provided a historical context for some of the viewpoints and decisions described by interviewees whose experiences are outlined in the appendices. Needless to say the

advancement of techno spirituality did not engender cultural democracy in Britain although some like David Harding argue the latter was achieved for a time in Craigmillar.<sup>128</sup> This collective effort from below was politically complex and contested from within. Nevertheless good-faith in community relations and the arts appears to have prevented more open dissent; and it is important to remember this consensus was underpinned by the everyday support of basic welfare needs in the local area. The achievements of the CFS originate, at least in part, from the shortcomings of the labour movement but ultimately the organisation was a poor compensation for them. Even if the orthodox narrative of the CFS is to be believed, and everything really kicked-off because the young Philip Crummy was refused music lessons in the local school in the early 1960s, it still needs to be recognised that musical education remains the object of great discretionary powers as the next chapter examines.

The confluence of different political and discursive factors which lead to techno-spiritual ideas of reform strengthen the good-faith economy, and appear to weaken artistic labour. Despite the efforts of some people in the arts to form unions rather than professional associations masquerading as unions, the images of dark satanic mills and industrial alienation seem to have stood in the way of people organising artistic labour along less haphazard and sustainable lines.<sup>129</sup> With other case studies in mind such as Claire Bishop's (2012) study of the Artists Placement Group in the 1970s, it is difficult not to conclude that many people in the arts, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, have been caught in the same web of ideas woven by the technocrats of post-industrialism.<sup>130</sup> Blue skies were never really seen during this voyage which is why Paul Nolan's point about having fun for its own sake ought to be taken seriously. Of course saying that to anyone filling out funding applications in a society where virtually everything is an instrument to achieve superficially liberal ends within a socio-technical system, where creative work ought to be one's 'bliss' is quite another matter. Bolstered by the good-faith economy these ideas about work may be no less disempowering than the Soviet Union's ideological organisation of labour.

Reflecting on the 'de-politicisation' of community arts Matarasso (2013) has returned to the 1970s for inspiration and continues in the mould set by Braden and others who separated artistic labour from industrial labour at important conceptual and political levels. He concludes by saying that renewing the cooperative and collective spirit of the community arts 'will require hard work, with little money.'<sup>131</sup> Historical and theoretical discussion of past

failures is needed and this ‘will require listening to those who have gone before and have experience — and to those who haven’t, because they have new ideas about a world unlike the one that has been. It will, in short, require a lot of us.’<sup>132</sup> All this may sound like a plausible call to action in the face of austerity policies but *experience* should tell us that such utopian statements couched in come all ye language tend to dignify low pay, precarity, and the freelance ideology of the social entrepreneur. Not only is this discourse a gift in the good-faith economy, but any politically workable theory of solidarity should tell us that you can’t help anyone else unless you can also help yourselves.<sup>133</sup> Perhaps the great irony is how far the likes of Matarasso have travelled from the much clearer admission in 1985 by Comedia writers that exploitation would be part of the supposedly ‘radical political economy’ they wanted to build.<sup>134</sup>

According to some analysts the ideological and economic decline of social democracy in Britain predates Harold Wilson’s technocratic politics. The eclectic socio-political theorist Paul Hirst (1947–2003) notes in the 1989 anthology on *Reversing Industrial Decline* that a viable economic policy needs to run over at least three parliaments and therefore the centralisation and politicisation of economic policy in the hands of usually shorter lived Westminster governments is a way of doing things which is always likely to fail the people.<sup>135</sup> As Hirst argues, this system encouraged politicians to take an authoritarian and centralised approach to socio-economic policy which he thinks Labour did when coming to office in 1945. He cites the imperiousness of post-war Labour leaders like Hartely Shawcross (1902–2003). Hirst may have a point. If the results are anything to go by the class struggle has been very poorly conducted by the Labour party. Often it seems to have reflected the hang-ups of a meritocratic leadership more than a serious interest in social democracy. However Hirst’s co-author and interlocutor, Viet Bader, points out in *Associative Democracy —The Real Third Way*, that to counter the flaws of markets the reforms Hirst envisages would require structural equality in the school system.<sup>136</sup> If the instrumental discourses of the arts can produce anything truly new in Britain they would need to start by revisiting the decisions made by countless people like Helen Crummy MBE (Most Excellent Order of The British Empire) to try a different tack.

The politics of artistic participation examined in this chapter can only reinforce the belief in the exit rights enjoyed by Britons with sufficient income to buy private education; the value of which increases when a public system fails to serve the whole public. Similarly the social



and political value of artistic participation increases when faced with foundational structural injustices in education the arts help to let the State off the hook. Three people starting out with diametrically opposed principles like Crummy as the Labour party activist; a regressive headmaster; and a member of the local aristocracy, may indeed forge the mutual respect Crummy mentions in her account. But this was based on the aestheticisation of left-wing politics. The case of the CFS shows how this aestheticisation feeds into something more complex than a critically absent-minded working class envisaged by Benjamin.<sup>137</sup> In the period I have discussed the sphere of action shifted down from national and international scale to local space. Technocratic discourse supported the creation of such communitarian test tubes in the arts, resulting in what I have called techo-spirituality. Among other things it proposes creativity rather than equality as the key to progressive educational reform. To some these paths are so well worn they now take on the appearance of ritual.<sup>138</sup> 'Following your bliss' is no answer to a broader lack of mutual respect between adversaries who do not all feel the impact of State failures, and therefore do not have the same stake in the development of State services. This was all too evident at Crummy's funeral in Craigmillar in 2011. The council housing stock in Craigmillar was demolished in a process which caused some remaining residents to call the area Bosnia. Homes — that thing which Kenneth Williams thought most important — had been obliterated.<sup>139</sup> As Nolan recalls, the trouble with Craigmillar in the eyes of other Edinburgh councillors was that it was akin to an 'Indian reservation'. Sited on what was identified as prime land for redevelopment, he was told the 'Indians' would have to go.<sup>140</sup> The arts were certainly a catalyst for something in Craigmillar but nothing that protected the community.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I0hSZedNeo> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51izd9YsUeE> (In two parts last accessed February 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Burgess et al (1968).

<sup>3</sup> From Wilson's speech given to the 1963 Labour Party conference.

<sup>4</sup> See Kjældgaard, L.H. (2011) for an account of three phases in the discourses of Danish literature which correspond to stages in the politics of the welfare State.

<sup>5</sup> See Lewis (2013) [1961], p. xxxviii.

<sup>6</sup> Religion and the ethos of public service were at least as precious to British social democracy as the Marxism and anarchism which remained on the fringes. To a great extent techno-spirituality appears to absorb and also dissolve those four traditions which harried and hindered Britain's otherwise unalloyed business interests. See Williams, R. (1962) on the concept of service, p.313 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Motton is by no means the first left-wing aesthete and moralist to give the impression that the latter is somehow less significant.

<sup>8</sup> Hobsbawm (1999) p.163ff. See also Wiener (1981) who makes a very similar argument more comprehensively in the *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980*. Several copies of this book were bought by Margaret Thatcher's minister Keith Joseph and distributed to the other members of Thatcher's cabinet at the time. Wiener's argument that British industrialists had never been fully committed to the expansion of capitalist marketplace was yet another critique which unwittingly bolstered the faith in finance capitalism; a faith which we also find in the writings of the systems theorists discussed in this chapter.

<sup>9</sup> See *Edward Said, The Last Interview*, by Charles Glass, (2003)  
<https://archive.org/details/EdwardSaid-TheLastInterview-2003> (Last accessed July 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Hobsbawm (1978), pp.279-286.

<sup>11</sup> Since the time of Hobsbawm's article, globalisation has driven competition for even higher rates of profit at the same time as lowering the wage ceiling for workers. A prime contemporary example of the rhetoric deployed against trade unionists comes from the former Director General of the Confederation of British Industry, Digby Jones. In public addresses and motivational talks Jones often announces to British listeners that "China wants your lunch and India wants your dinner." Concerning the narrow sectionalism Hobsbawm criticised, arguably what matters more than high wage demands (always used by employers to argue workers are pricing themselves out of the market) are the moral and economic self-evaluations, which give workers a greater or lesser sense of social and political status. If, as Hobsbawm suggests, high wage demands were a problem for socialist class politics then the implication is that they ought to be harnessed to create a greater uniformity of economic exploitation among the working class. Arguably the opposite is the case: Because wages are regulated according to grades and grids of duties and skills, successful wage demands in one part of a grid generate other claims further up or down the scale and this is what articulates the class 'movement' at the basic economic level. See also Boltanski and Chiapello (2012), pp.302-311.

<sup>12</sup> Pimlott (2005), p.196.

<sup>13</sup> See Williams (1989), pp.143-149.

<sup>14</sup> See *Parkinson* 1973 special show,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyNZDHV23Hs&spfreload=5> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>15</sup> See Stevens (2010), p.275.

<sup>16</sup> On 23rd May 1968 Michael Mills, Head of BBC Comedy and Light Entertainment complained to Paul Fox about his instructions to make changes to an episode of *Dad's Army*. Mills questioned the attitude that 'clowns must stay clowns.' See memo in BBC Archive,  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/dadsarmy/5260.shtml> (Last accessed January 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Williams (1989), p.134.

<sup>18</sup> See Hall and Jacques (1989).

<sup>19</sup> See Brunnschweiler and Bulte (2008) and McNeish and Logan (2012). This political-economic curse remains very difficult to pin down in the countries it supposedly afflicts, i.e. those rich in natural resources. Similar and worse problems bedevil the former colonies more generally.

<sup>20</sup> For more analysis of celebrity and politics see Marshall (1997) and Evans and Hesmondhalgh (eds.) (2005).

<sup>21</sup> Marx (1844) writes: 'The modern *ancien régime* is rather only the *comedian* of a world order whose *true heroes* are dead. History is thorough and goes through many phases when carrying an old form to the grave. The last phases of a world-historical form is its *comedy*. The gods of Greece, already tragically wounded to death in Aeschylus's tragedy *Prometheus Bound*, had to re-die a comic death in Lucian's *Dialogues*. Why this course of history? So that humanity should part with its past *cheerfully*. This *cheerful* historical destiny is what we vindicate for the political authorities of Germany. See introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, online <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Hodgkinson (2005).

<sup>23</sup> Although Scotland remains part of the UK the large turnout and unexpectedly close result in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum revealed the extent of disenchantment with the Britain's internal status-quo. This was underlined by the 2015 general election when voters ousted the UK wide political parties from Scotland's seats in the House of Commons.

<sup>24</sup> See Bronowski interviewed on *Parkinson*, (1974) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFgnGUL78MU> (Last accessed July 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Marx and Engels (1958) p.42.

<sup>26</sup> See, House of Commons, *Science and Technology Committee, Seventh Report*, published 4 July 2007, section 31 'Horizon Scanning', also available online, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmsctech/66/6604.htm#a4> (Last accessed July 2014).

<sup>27</sup> See moon project developed by The Arts Catalyst, [http://artscatalyst.org/projects/detail/republic\\_of\\_the\\_moon\\_london](http://artscatalyst.org/projects/detail/republic_of_the_moon_london) (Last accessed January 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Speaking before she made the presentation of the 2006 Turner Prize, Yoko Ono said that the arts are part of 'the peace industry' which she regretted was less united than the war industry (in Thornton, 2008), p.137). In fact the art market has long been part of war-economics and the arts have been ideological instruments of war-policy. The higher and more noble they appear the greater their propaganda value. Informed by Schillerian aesthetics, the CIA after 1945 began to provide covert support for the arts and letters, which they saw as a significant weapon in fighting communism and getting the non-communist-left on side. See Saunders (1991) p.21 ff.

<sup>29</sup> See Smith (1989) pp.89-95 and Cooley (1987) pp.139-156. Cooley documents the political opposition Lucas Aerospace workers experienced in proposing economically viable and socially useful alternatives to armaments.

<sup>30</sup> See Chang (2011), p. 125 ff.

<sup>31</sup> See Hudson (2003) and (2005).

<sup>32</sup> See Bishop (2012) pp.163-192.

<sup>33</sup> On the basis of strike actions Norway, Sweden and Denmark were measured as the three most militant countries in the world in the 1930s, see Childs (1938). On national development see Emery and Trist (1972) p.152. See also Emery and Thorsrud with Trist (1969) and Ryggvik (2010).

<sup>34</sup> The impact of anti-union legislation can be detected in the massive decline of trade unionism in the private sector and in the overall decline of strikes. By 1995 strikes were even fewer than during the 1939-45 period. See diagram 52 in Hobsbawm (1999).

<sup>35</sup> See Coats (2005).

<sup>36</sup> See Motton (2009), pp.79-87.

<sup>37</sup> See Witts (1998), pp.394-407.

<sup>38</sup> According to Benjamin in 1936, writing of the Nazi regime, the only possible result of politics being turned into aesthetics is war because only war 'can set a goal for mass movements on the largest scale while respecting the traditional property system.' See Benjamin (2003) [1936] in Harrison and Wood (eds.), pp.526-527. Although this may be a particularly bleak critical analysis, which belongs with its time and place; economic globalisation today is going hand in hand with the infamously unbounded conflict with terrorism.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.526.

<sup>40</sup> See Alain de Botton's talk on 'Art as Therapy', 27 October 2013, University of London. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFnNgTSkHPM> (Last accessed February 2014).

<sup>41</sup> De Botton quotes the historian and philosopher Theodore Zeldin here. In 2007 Zeldin was brought into to an advisory committee on labour market reforms for the French government of Nicolas Sarkozy. In October 2013 De Botton also spoke on the linkage between art and work at the Randstad corporate event promoting the report 'Fulfilment@Work'. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyTBza9Nhrk> (Last accessed February 2014).

<sup>42</sup> MacIntyre (2002), p.182.

<sup>43</sup> According to Schiller the 'extinction of the State [in the revolution] contains its vindication.' The reason he gives is that; 'Society uncontrolled, instead of hastening upwards into organic life, is relapsing into its original elements.' See Schiller (1994) p.35. It is easy to see this utopian statement which poses a higher organic life for what it is — a poetic allegory of redemption which sees the State as an imperfect socio-political arrangement that must be overcome. What Schiller implies is that the State — crudely and mechanically — articulates a social contract necessary for the civil peace, hence its paradoxical vindication in the face of what, in Schiller's eyes, was the flawed revolution of a flawed people.

<sup>44</sup> See Scott (1972).

<sup>45</sup> See Buonarroti, (1957). Translation of 'Manifesto of the Equals' available at, <http://www.marxists.org/history/france/revolution/conspiracy-equals/1796/manifesto.htm> (Last accessed February 2014).

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<sup>46</sup> By contrast when the famously incorruptible Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794) insisted on the necessity of the revolutionary terror to defend public virtue and justice against counter-revolution (six months before he too fell before the guillotine) he implied the opposite. He argued that calls for *mercy* ought to be granted for humanity and above all for the weak, not for intriguers. See Rude (1975), p.206.

<sup>47</sup> Kelly (1984), pp. 71-74.

<sup>48</sup> Quotation from Eagleton (2011), p. 26.

<sup>49</sup> C.S. Lewis writes on friendships, secret visions and the way a 'group will disdain as well as ignore those outside it [and turn] itself into something very like a class. A coterie is a self-appointed aristocracy.' See Lewis (1998), pp. 64- 75.

<sup>50</sup> See Craig and Brooks (2006).

<sup>51</sup> See Lewis (1998), pp.64-65.

<sup>52</sup> See <http://www.comedia.org.uk/> (Last accessed February 2014).

<sup>53</sup> See Lewis (1998), p.115.

<sup>54</sup> Proponents of the "Third Way" argued for the introduction of a new pragmatic ethos to stem the tide of trade union decline by turning away from some of the wider ideological issues of social justice. See for example Coats (2005) who argues for moving away from ideas about 'getting even' to 'getting on.'

<sup>55</sup> The seven Christian heavenly virtues which oppose the deadly sins, following in brackets, are Chastity (Lust) Temperance (Gluttony) Charity (Greed) Diligence (Sloth) Patience (Wrath) Kindness (Envy) Humility (Pride). See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_virtues](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_virtues) (Last accessed March 2014).

<sup>56</sup> In the words of the publisher Robert Laffont (1916-2010), '(...) I had the honour, if not the pleasure, of losing money by commissioning the two monumental volumes (...) of Hemingway.' Quotation from 'The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods' in Bourdieu (1993), pp.74 ff.

<sup>57</sup> The IWW enjoys active and relatively enthusiastic support from at least two people in the Variant network who I have spoken to in the course of this research.

<sup>58</sup> In relation to this complex issue concerning the perceived spirit of trade unionism one thing is clear. The political right, including out and out imperialists, has never been dismissive of unions. Recognising political capital and potential leverage they instead sought to manipulate and ideologically mould trade unions at least as much as communists "paid for by Moscow" or hard-left parties accused of not promoting the "true interests of workers". See Herod (2001) pp.161-197.

<sup>59</sup> Of course the idea of art as 'a pillar of liberty,' in the words of Dwight Eisenhower (1890-1969) still sounds plausible to many ears. However, as Frances Stoner Saunders (1999) unravels in *The Cultural Cold War*, this same attitude, and the financial ability to wheel out the right sort of art around the world, fed the religious mood of self-righteous over-confidence in US democracy. This was only to the advantage of the very thing Eisenhower eventually warned was its gravest internal threat – the military-industrial-complex. The orchestration of artistic and intellectual activity by the United States at home and abroad through the CIA funded International Association for Cultural Freedom, went hand in hand with a far reaching manipulation of cultural production. This put an end to many of the advances in public discourse that had emerged from the New Deal era in the 1930s when socio-economic justice was at the forefront of the political agenda to the benefit of both freedom and art in

the US. As Saunders concludes, what was to prevail later on as a result of art being deliberately conflated with democracy and freedom was an aesthetically abstracted freedom, an absolutist ideology of 'freedomism.' See Saunders (1999), p.415.

<sup>60</sup> Due to the revelations of CIA support, the non-communist-left was seen to be more compromised than at any other time previously. Almost all cultural activity that might have won the support of the CIA was touched by a shadow of suspicion. Some Americans involved in espionage thought the whole project to deploy left-wing artists and intellectuals in the battle against communism had been misguided from the outset; and in making their rather derogatory opinions known they could only have reinforced this mood of suspicion. Ibid. p. 400 ff.

<sup>61</sup> The impact of this American propaganda effort was felt in Britain and can be charted by the rise and protracted fall of the magazine *Encounter* after it was exposed as a CIA beneficiary organisation in 1967. The prestige of the arts and letters was damaged when figures such as Stephen Spender (1909-1995) Frank Kermode (1919-2010) (the editors of *Encounter* who resigned when the operation became known) were seen as willing dupes or buyable pieces in a geo-political game which caused some to be grateful that George Orwell (also implicated) had died before he could be fully claimed by the right. In an act of supplication Spender looked to make friends with French students in revolt and told himself that if a revolution came again, he would willingly hand over his real-estate in Provence to them. After struggling on without the support of 'spook' patrons *Encounter* closed in 1991 and its American cousin *Partisan Review* closed in 2003. Ibid. pp. 300-301 and p.424.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 258-278.

<sup>63</sup> See McGrath (2002) on localism in 'A Good Night Out', p.126.

<sup>64</sup> Braden (1978), p.147.

<sup>65</sup> Lippard (1984).

<sup>66</sup> For Amber's account of their own development and concern with 'regionalism' see Amber Online at, [http://www.amber-online.com/history\\_chapters/1968-1974](http://www.amber-online.com/history_chapters/1968-1974) (Last accessed January 2015).

<sup>67</sup> Braden (1978), p.148.

<sup>68</sup> See Jenkins (1979).

<sup>69</sup> Braden (1978), p.147.

<sup>70</sup> Landry et al (1985), p.98.

<sup>71</sup> Aware of the disarray of the trade unions at the time Comedia were quick to seize on the new management discourses, See Landry et al (1985), [note 2] p.100. They highlight the desire expressed in American management literature to learn from the liberal arts. They discuss *In Search of Excellence*, a book by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman (1982) associated with the McKinsey business consultancy, and more generally management's efforts to create a 'workforce that is [psychologically] turned on' (Ibid. p.57). Comedia's authors are not concerned with accountability in public finance, and more in line with Margaret Thatcher's (1925-2013) monetarist ideology than they would have admitted, they wanted more efficient business models to be adopted by the left. Everything they identified as wrong with the independent magazine *The Leveller* was, on the other hand, right with the Communist Party's market friendly magazine *Marxism Today*, the platform for Hobsbawm and the party's reformist wing. Despite the marketability which Landry et al saw in *Marxism Today* it was also to collapse in 1991 with notes of regret coming from well known politicians such as Chris Patten and Paddy Ashdown.

<sup>72</sup> Landry et al (1985), pp.49-63.

<sup>73</sup> Landry et al (1985), pp.10-13.

<sup>74</sup> See Cooley (1987).

<sup>75</sup> Kelly writes that: 'In our work with trade unions, for example, we should cease pretending that we are, in some way, industrial workers, and acknowledge both our different working circumstances and their relationship to our political goals. We should work on projects which like the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards, question the purposes of production and the values of what is being produced.' See Kelly (1984) p.136.

<sup>76</sup> See Enzensberger (1982), pp.3-14.

<sup>77</sup> Enzensberger builds on Marx's argument that our thoughts are a product of society.

<sup>78</sup> It may be that few people really believe in art as a sovereign realm and shrewdly subscribe to it for want of something better. Yet most of us believe in the playfulness and possible emancipation of our own minds. In line with Marx, Enzensberger critiques this belief in the ability to conquer our socially/industrially/historically produced selves. While this may be an unpopular line of critique, in so far as it implies a victory of structure over agency, it is striking that the ruling classes rarely show a special desire to be particularly outstanding. For the real aristocracy conformity has been seen as a necessary condition of maintaining the order of the day.

<sup>79</sup> See 'Unpopular Front: American art and the Cold War', by Louis Menand, (17 October 2005), in *The New Yorker*. Available online, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/10/17/unpopular-front> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>80</sup> See Foot (1968) p.173 ff.

<sup>81</sup> See '1978 - Job Creation in Craigmillar' at, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e36e8We2R\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e36e8We2R_4) (Last accessed, December 2014).

<sup>82</sup> Crummy (1992), p.71.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p.43.

<sup>84</sup> See also Burgess (1973) who offers parents advice about challenging discretionary powers in the school system. See p.30 and p.219 ff.

<sup>85</sup> As Crummy writes 'we were challenging the way in which Politics (with a capital P.) seemed to be the province of men'. Crummy (1992), p.48.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>87</sup> *Made in Dagenham* (2010) directed by Nigel Cole, produced by Audely Films.

<sup>88</sup> See Crummy (1992), p.109.

<sup>89</sup> See McGrath, (2002), pp.124-125.

<sup>90</sup> In Craigmillar (2004), p.59.

<sup>91</sup> Nolan did go and see the community psychiatrist (Greenwood) who rejected Crummy's insinuation about his state of mind. From author's interview with Nolan.

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<sup>92</sup> On Scandinavian welfare rights see Emery and Trist (1972), p.152.

<sup>93</sup> For example see the public-funded national newspaper *Klassekampen*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klassekampen> (Last accessed February 2014).

<sup>94</sup> See Foot (1968).

<sup>95</sup> See Matarasso (1997), Summary p.1.

<sup>96</sup> ‘One does not construct an identity out of thin air’, Immanuel Wallerstein quoted by Tom Nairn, in ‘Tartan Power’, see Hall and Jacques (1989), p.247.

<sup>97</sup> See for example Landry et al (1996). Here the benefits of participatory arts programmes are mapped out — through the methodological equivalent of burying weeds and collecting flowers — in the following areas: Enhancing social cohesion; Improving local image; Reducing offending behaviour; Developing self-confidence; Promoting interest in the local environment; Building private and public sector partnerships; Exploring identities; Enhancing organisational capacity; Supporting independence; Exploring visions of the future. All these are said to feed into an ‘equally wide range of cultural catalysts’ of regeneration: ‘The building as regenerator; Artists activity as regenerators; Events as regenerators; The bizarre as regenerator; Planning regulation as regenerator; Flexibility as regenerator; Social confidence: Mechanisms as regenerators The Individual as regenerator; The artists as regenerator; Marketing as regenerator; The organisation as regenerator’.

<sup>98</sup> Matarasso (2011), p.37.

<sup>99</sup> In a particularly telling instance of an increasingly repressive system, the use of the word ‘ballot’ in an email sent by a civil servant member of the PCS union was challenged as ‘an incitement to industrial action’ and taken up as a disciplinary matter. Like many other Britons the offender has ample opportunities to participate in the arts and such experiences are evidence of the repressive dynamics that have come into being over the same period the arts were supposedly giving more people a voice. I mention the experience of this PCS activist in the article *The Progress of Creeping Fascism*, see Logan (2009), p.3. This article offers a general view of the nexus of technocratic expertise and corporatist ideas. One of the key scholars in this field, Frank Fischer, calls this conjunction ‘techno-corporatism’ and argues that it rests on undemocratic beliefs; ‘Democracy is taken to be an inappropriate, inferior decision-making system for the emerging post-industrial society.’ In place of democratic contest techno-corporatism brings an expert rationality and set of tactics to bear on society. See Fischer (1990), p.16. A concern informing the research questions of the present study is the scarcity of open analysis about how the arts assist this sort of settlement.

<sup>100</sup> Over time Matarasso has honed the arguments contained in *Use or Ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts*, a controversial 1997 study done with Comedia. Two academic journal articles appeared criticising the study. See Belfiore (2002) and Merli (2002). Merli (2002), suggests that Matarasso ‘is measuring something else, such as the social desirability of the abstract concepts of “happiness,” “empowerment” and “confidence.”’ Drawing on Bourdieu’s sociology, she argues that desirability is a variable which can skew research findings and accuses Matarasso of lending support to the ethos of ‘new missionaries,’ people she described as playing ‘guitar with marginalised youth, the disabled and the unemployed, aiming at mitigating the perception which they have of their own exclusion.’ See Merli (2002) pp 107-109. Matarasso (2003) responded in the same journal of cultural policy and argued that there was little of substance to back up Merli’s image of a missionary mentality.

<sup>101</sup> Emery and Thorsrud, with Trist (1969), p.85.

<sup>102</sup> Trist (1972), p.167.



<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>104</sup> Vickers (1970), p.53.

<sup>105</sup> Vickers writes: 'To preserve the legitimacy of protest is as important to preserve as to preserve the legitimacy of the role; for they break together, and when they break, the conditions of civil war are present. We may expect that the limits of both will be defined, in the post-liberal era, with much more explicit concern. This will be needed equally in all fields of authority; for all are expressions and guardians of the role system on which the working of any society depends'. Ibid., p.189.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p.189.

<sup>107</sup> See Margaret Thatcher's interview for the *Sunday Times* (3 May 1981) archived by the Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Available online at, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475> (Last accessed January 2015).

<sup>108</sup> Vickers (1970), p.52.

<sup>109</sup> Emery and Trist (1972), p.201.

<sup>110</sup> See Lietaer (2001), p.314.

<sup>111</sup> Where a simple political hierarchy or an indigenous aristocracy did not exist in what was to become Nigeria, the British did their best to create something like it in the warrant chief system during colonisation.

<sup>112</sup> Emery and Trist (1972), p.175.

<sup>113</sup> In my time as a photographer employed by the CFS the only time I recall a photograph causing some worries among staff was when I included in a festival exhibition, a picture of CFS workers throwing a large portrait of the Duke of Edinburgh onto a bonfire. The traditional respect for aristocratic support was seen to be in doubt. For an example of this respect being reciprocated see text by Gordon, Baron of Prestoungrange, in Craigmillar (2004), p.74.

<sup>114</sup> Andrew Crummy and Gordon, Baron of Prestoungrange were jointly responsible for *The Battle of Prestonpans Tapestry 1745*, a community artwork completed in 2010. The Baron of Prestoungrange is Publishing Advisor for the 2001 edition of *Burke's Landed Gentry: The Kingdom in Scotland*, and subsequent related volumes. He represents cultural heritage and local regeneration activities as very much in keeping with the best traditions of *noblesse oblige*. According to his online biography: 'Gordon knows from overwhelming evidence around the world that if local people can join together in such initiatives, the area can only benefit economically. He describes his contribution as "democratic cyber-feudalism - not absentee landlordism" and "as deeply satisfying as it is fun". However viewed, his role looks like a potentially winning combination of the best of traditional "baronial values" with a new spirit of democratic entrepreneurship, and one which he hopes local people will feel able to accept, enjoy and exploit'. See [http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/minibios/p/prestoungrange\\_baron.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/minibios/p/prestoungrange_baron.htm) (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>115</sup> Matarasso (2010), pp.5-6.

<sup>116</sup> NACCCE (1999), p.2.

<sup>117</sup> In what follows I take Robinson's approach as an example of the general attitude prevalent in British educational psychology from at least the time of Herbert Read's 1943 book *Education through Art*. Read also submerged any possible political and psychological discussion of equality in a one-

dimensional psychological discourse of creativity. The same tradition lives on in the concluding chapter to *British Educational Psychology – The First Hundred Years*, where Andy Allen and Julia Hardy write; ‘Party politics, policy and outcomes are always a topic of debate and are best left outside this book.’ See Arnold and Hardy (2013), p.148.

<sup>118</sup> Robinson with Aronica (2009), p.247.

<sup>119</sup> See <http://www.itv.com/news/2014-02-03/michael-gove-outlines-plans-to-break-down-the-berlin-wall-between-private-and-state-schools/> (Last accessed February 2014).

<sup>120</sup> School for Life Sunday Sermon ‘On Passion’ by Ken Robinson at Conway Hall, London, March 2011. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8Hl5MUr8w> (Last accessed February 2014).

<sup>121</sup> See Robinson talks, ‘Do Schools Kill Creativity?’ Monterey, California, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY>; ‘How to Escape Education’s Death Valley’, New York City, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wX78iKhInsc>; RSA Animate presentation, ‘Changing Education Paradigms’ by Ken Robinson, October 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U> (Last accessed February 2014).

<sup>122</sup> For a reflexive discourse analysis of Ted talks see Benjamin Bratton, ‘What’s Wrong with TED Talks?’ TEDx SanDiego December 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo5cKRmJaf0> (Last accessed February 2014).

<sup>123</sup> School for Life Sunday Sermon ‘On Passion’ op.cit.

<sup>124</sup> See Hall (2009), pp.247-262.

<sup>125</sup> For a moment of hubristic clarity about US ambitions on the part of the George W. Bush administration see Ferguson (2005) p.VIII.

<sup>126</sup> Christopher Hitchens [1949-2011] (2007) advanced this critique of religion very persuasively. His key argument is that monotheism hinges on a master-slave belief system which encourages good people to do wicked things. The argument is bolstered by the many examples of religious devotion becoming a cloak for opportunism and criminal exploitation. See the debate on the motion, ‘The Catholic church is a force for good in the world’, staged in London by Intelligence Squared in 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrIHw0fZNOA> (Last accessed October 2014). The crimes that Hitchens stresses cannot be reduced to the problem Terry Eagleton (2014) prefers to focus on, namely, religion being used to rationalise the social order. Rather it seems that what is at stake both in religion, and the belief in art, is the production and orientation of virtue in the name of civilisation.

<sup>127</sup> See ‘Morality and Psychoanalysis’ in Lewis (1970), p.82 ff.

<sup>128</sup> See David Harding’s ‘Cultural Democracy-Craigmillar Style’, in Craigmillar (2004), p.29.

<sup>129</sup> See Logan (2010) Comment ‘Art Workers Don’t Kiss Ass’, Variant magazine, Issue 37, (Glasgow: Variant).

<sup>130</sup> See Bishop (2012), pp.168-191.

<sup>131</sup> Matarasso (2013), p.237. Also online at, [http://www.academia.edu/2493064/\\_All\\_in\\_this\\_together\\_The\\_depoliticisation\\_of\\_community\\_art\\_in\\_Britain\\_1970-2011](http://www.academia.edu/2493064/_All_in_this_together_The_depoliticisation_of_community_art_in_Britain_1970-2011) (Last Accessed March 2017).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>133</sup> Another expression of the ideas promoted both by Robinson and Matarasso earn the following headlines in the LARC publication, *Telling Stories*: “Connect: ‘You can put a lot into a drama and speak words that are meaningful to somebody else, to an audience that can’t get those words out to anybody.’ – Barbara. Take Notice: ‘I just can’t get over them; seriously, they blew me away mate, cos I thought it’d be good, but I just didn’t think it’d be, you know, like as good as it’s been.’ – Ian. Give: ‘I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it and I actually do volunteer work now; in fact I’m here, what? Almost three days a week, more than I really want to be but, you know... it’s the way it goes here.’ – John.” In Matarasso (2011) [contents page].

<sup>134</sup> Landry et al (1995) use the term ‘self-exploitation’ although of course all exploitation, with the exception of slavery, is to some degree voluntary or self-imposed. See pp.96-99.

<sup>135</sup> See Hirst and Zeitlin (1989), pp. 279-280.

<sup>136</sup> Presumably Hirst’s associational suggestions for education appear too compatible with financialisation for Veit Bader. As Bader points out in his sympathetic critique of Hirst, ‘exit rights’ in education do not favour the poor. The overall problem Bader sees in associative democracy is that it fosters a ‘thin public morality’ but paradoxically would demand the same levels of shared commitment and loyalty as a stricter egalitarian regime. See Hirst and Bader (2001), p.190 ff.

<sup>137</sup> Op.cit. in Harrison and Wood (eds.), pp.526-527.

<sup>138</sup> See Femi Folorunso in Appendix IV.

<sup>139</sup> Towards the end of his life, still in demand on talk shows, Kenneth Williams seemed unimpressed with the much vaunted British ambition to become a hi-tech economy based on knowledge and creativity. He abandoned or forgot his undoubtedly sincere arguments about craft and the pursuit of excellence in one’s work — arguments just as reminiscent of John Ruskin’s (1819-1900) attempts to guide art and the economy along Christian lines as Voltaire’s (1694-1778) lurking fears of the unenlightened ‘rabble.’ See MacIntyre 2002 p.177. Ruskin was all in favour of hierarchy but suspicious of specialisation. Likewise in 1987, a year before he killed himself while suffering from digestive disorders, Williams brought his wit to the rise of medical specialists: “Everyone’s becoming better and better at less and less. Eventually someone’s going to be superb at nothing!” See Williams on *Aspel & Company* ITV [1987] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdDtwc9HA7s> (Last accessed February 2014). What makes the joke reverberate may actually run very deep in British public consciousness today. It is the sense of living in something close to a virtual economy — that is to say one which is constantly seems on the brink of satisfying basic needs like housing, but can do so only by producing new wants and desires. In essence this is the creative strategy outlined in *Staying Ahead*, the 2007 report commissioned by the UK’s Department of Culture Media and Sport discussed in chapter two.

<sup>140</sup> From author’s interview op.cit.

## Appendix IV: Biographical Narrative

### **Femi Folorunso: From the Fast track to the Slow Track**

Femi Folorunso was born in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1958 and at the time of writing worked for Creative Scotland as a Development Officer. Previously he worked for the Scottish Arts Council which he joined in 2001 not long after finishing a PhD in English Literature at Edinburgh University. Although he was already an experienced university lecturer in literature and drama he was still unable to find an academic post in Scotland where three of his children were born and raised. Well qualified and highly articulate in both English and Yoruba he was told informally after one application that he had not been considered because it was thought his accent might obstruct his communication with indigenous students. Never feeling like a victim - for reasons discussed below - Femi is nonetheless acutely aware of the way discrimination in Scotland forestalled his career.

Femi's experience of Scotland's "glass ceilings" are in sharp contrast to his education and what others may regard as his 'fast track' career in Nigeria. He was a star pupil at the Baptist Boys' High School in Abeokuta, one of the elite first generation missionary schools in Western Nigeria. Taken into journalism at the age of seventeen, by twenty two he had risen to an editorial position in The Nigerian Tribune, the newspaper founded by the independence leader Obafemi Awolowo. He was given leave by his employers to study for his degrees at the University of Ife where he studied under Nigeria's Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka. He finally gave up journalism in 1990 and became a lecturer at Ife and was also active in the Academic Staff Union which has a particularly influential role in the Nigerian labour movement. In 1994 Femi was offered Commonwealth Academic scholarship to do his PhD at Edinburgh where I met him in 1996. We were to become close friends. His departure from Nigeria during the Sani Abacha military regime, coincided with the intense internationalisation of the campaign for democracy after many years of military rule and following the military annulment of the Nigerian presidential election in 1993.

My interview with Femi was prompted by his telephone call telling me about a radio report on the success of the Sistema Scotland youth orchestra project in Raploch. The report applauded the orchestra project in this working class community where there were only a tiny handful of children who played musical instruments and where now there are hundreds of

young musicians. Unusually for someone working in arts' funding the positive statistics were no cause for celebration in Femi's view. As he told me on the phone, "the question that should be asked is what does this say about the education system in Britain?"

I interviewed Femi to try and gain some insights into why this sort of critical structural question - rarely heard in mainstream discussions of social amelioration via the arts - was so evident to him. In our discussion I asked him to reflect on the motivations and concerns he identified from his background in Nigeria. In no particular order of importance they were the ethos of public service and a commitment to the common good which he could recall in the newly independent nation; the significance of access to good education as a formative issue for many Nigerian radical activists of his generation; the social politics of upward mobility in Nigeria, and lastly a critical appreciation of ritual.

A key to the various perspectives Femi offered in the course of our conversation was an unexpected encounter he had in his early twenties when he came across a young woman who had been his classmate at primary school. The memory of the shock of meeting a prematurely aged young mother who he could recall as a child and who now looked as if she could be in her forties was Femi's illustration of the massive inequalities that surround Nigeria's education system. As we went on to discuss, these inequalities are also built into the system as a result of the deep seated British colonial attitude towards education as an avenue of upward mobility for Nigerians, not an egalitarian means of enhancing the knowledge and well-being of all. Similarly Femi speaks about how public service was abused by social climbers and cynical functionaries in the civil service who served the corrupt governments of the day (often military) at the expense of the public interest. Although also subject to international structural adjustment policies, he sees these as crucial national factors that brought about the collapse of 'the left hand' of the Nigerian state; the institutions and services devoted to education, health and welfare and culture. In turning to the success of Sistema Scotland and the unsystematic reporting of failing schools in Britain Femi also brought up the issue of ritual. He regards capitalism as a whole social system that sacrifices people's lives. However in this way the system also produces the victims for certain ritualised acts of rescue to take place which are much needed to keep the system going and give it a moral dimension.

Femi was granted political asylum in Britain during the Abacha dictatorship in Nigeria. With the return of a nominally democratic government in 1999 he had to choose between being close to his Scottish-born children and accepting the frustrations of a career in Scotland, or returning to Nigeria where civilian politicians were now sharing spoils of a largely unearned victory over military government. Not wanting to become party to the politics of revenge in his homeland and wishing to see his children grow up, he chose to stay. Although his decision led to some humiliating experiences of naked discrimination and more subtle types of institutional racism he looks upon his life and his career as a series of political and moral choices. These underpin his sense of commitment to the public interest and the common good working in a job where he sees a lot of opportunism and unprincipled “horse trading”. To be a victim of racism is far too passive a role for Femi - it would be to become something like a ritual victim of the system instead of facing up to the downwardly mobile consequences of opposition in its real life drama.

## Chapter 7

### Doing Well in the Eyes of Capital:

### Cultural transformation from Venezuela to Scotland

*In Los Angeles (...) we had a large cathedral completely full of mothers and fathers of very low income families, and I could see mothers and fathers prostrated in front of their children with their uniforms and their [musical] instruments, completely overwhelmed by the dignity that the children bear. We have to realise that the moment a child receives an instrument he stops being a poor child. A child with an instrument is no longer poor. A child with an instrument and a teacher is no longer excluded. So our project is seen and perceived as an instrument of social inclusion and this represents for us an extraordinary mission, and a mission that goes beyond Venezuelan borders.*

José Antonio Abreu, founder of El Sistema, speaking at ‘Reaching for the Stars’, a forum on music Education held at the University of California, Berkeley, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012.<sup>1</sup>

*(...) if they [young people] say, “I want to be like him — I want to have his passion, and joy and being” — you can be like him; but you’ll have to practice eight hours a day, six, seven days a week, and you’ll have to get up in the morning and think about doing this day in and day out and then you will be, as it were, your own [Gustavo] Dudamel. So it’s a wonderful wonderful model to give to the world because it’s based on passion, it’s based on effort, it’s based on goodness, it’s one of the most productive icons the world has produced recently, I thank God for Venezuela that it’s produced not only El Sistema but it’s now producing individuals that the world is reckoning on and learning from.*

Film voice-over by Richard Holloway, Chair of Sistema Scotland, and former Bishop of the Scottish Episcopal Church, speaking about El Sistema’s celebrated ‘graduate’, the conductor, Gustavo Dudamel. Shown at the ‘Big Concert’, Stirling, Scotland, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012.

## Introduction

In 2008 a children’s orchestra was founded on the outskirts of Stirling in Scotland. Within only four years local children were performing under the baton of a world famous conductor, Gustavo Dudamel, and their performance was broadcast internationally by the BBC. This would be a much more remarkable story were it not part of a systematic effort to perform the same “miracle” time and time again. As Femi Folorunso sees it such ritual acts perpetuate inequality. [Appendix IV] Through fieldwork interviews and discourse analysis this chapter examines the political role of Sistema youth orchestras operating among deprived communities.<sup>2</sup> Founded in Venezuela during the oil boom of the 1970s, in recent years the Sistema model of social action has been adopted and independently developed in over fifty countries. Playing in an orchestra is the key teaching method, not simply the goal offered to

children. Taken together the orchestras inspired by the Venezuelan model may be regarded as the largest social inclusion project in the world, and another example of the techno-spirituality fostered by the good-faith economy.

Governments in Venezuela and Scotland appear to be at the opposite sides of neoliberal belief system. However in both these countries the mainstream political left moved away from the theories of exploitation to those of exclusion and inclusion. The orchestral training examined here exemplifies the latter school of thought as the above statements from José Antonio Abreu and Richard Holloway illustrate. They regard playing in an orchestra as a virtuous means of individual and social advancement for the disadvantaged. The Sistema model also goes to the heart of the good-faith economy. This is succinctly encapsulated by Abreu, the petroleum economist and amateur conductor who founded the organisation: ‘The rich have a duty to the poor which they will never pay financially. But they can pay it socially: to deprive the poor of the beauty of the highest art is a terrible form of oppression.’<sup>3</sup> This chapter looks at how this technocratic discourse of social justice and cultural transformation succeeded politically despite striking evidence of its failings.

The labour theory of value was once at the heart of socialist and labour movement politics internationally. In the British Isles throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the mantra of socio-economic transformation; ‘labour is the source of all wealth’ was emblazoned on numerous trade union banners and was the subject of popular analysis in countless political tracts about capitalist exploitation. Two insights were central to the political praxis that sought to confront exploitation. One was the realisation that capitalist production not only creates unemployment but is actually dependent on a reserve army of labour made up of landless populations destined to spend long periods in virtual destitution. Technology cannot offer beneficial free time for workers, or for societies at large, because its development is geared to the capitalist need to control and intensify labour in order to extract profit. The second, and closely related insight is derived more particularly from Karl Marx’s (1818-1883) analysis that the ultimate measure of wealth is the free time workers seek to seize back from capitalist production; articulated most clearly by collective struggles for shorter working hours. According to Marxian thinkers this struggle over the production and use of free time would eventually become the pivotal point in capitalist development. Either the system implodes because of the denial of the potential benefits of technology or it creates a sufficient number of new areas of labour for some form of capitalist exploitation to continue.<sup>4</sup>



The discourse of social exclusion arose in France in the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> In a relatively short time it has become as influential as the labour theory of value. No doubt for those not acquainted with Marx's writings, classical theory may appear anachronistic now that so much productive labour is technologically transformed or outsourced. As may be gleaned from Richard Holloway's commentary above, time-consuming and laborious cultural participation is envisaged as a remedy for the social ills now thought to be the results of exclusion from an otherwise functional capitalist economy. Not only is social policy justified on the basis of the potential for greater inclusion in this apparently healthy economic system, but classical understandings of social justice and the combined exploitation of labour and nature have been dropped. In Britain New Labour leaders could be heard describing capitalists as *the* wealth creators. These ideas have far reaching implications for class politics and the public understanding of key political issues such as progressive taxation and what might constitute sustainable development. There are knock-on effects to be seen in every area of policy.

My main focus is on the shift in cultural policy whereby issues of cultural democracy highlighted in this chapter are overtaken by a concern for the morale of the poor who are said to suffer from insufficient motivation and aspiration. They are now seen to be spiritually not politically impoverished. Consequently the idea that was so prevalent in community arts in the 1970s about people changing art has been turned on its head. Participating in the given structures of the arts is now supposed to change people, enriching them spiritually and making them upwardly mobile. The implication of this discourse which echoes 19<sup>th</sup> century attitudes about class and culture is that it is no longer possible to pursue socialist policies to restructure education, welfare and culture on egalitarian grounds. The survival of egalitarian policy elsewhere, seen for example in highly praised Finnish education system,<sup>6</sup> would suggest that this is a pessimistic ideology. However it fits with an economic system that appears to be set on dismantling the ethical frame and the material gains of socialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As I go on to discuss the overarching claims made for the benefits of the Sistema model in tackling problems of education and crime are as misleading as Abreu's passionate account of a concert in Los Angeles which is transcribed above. Are we really to believe that a child receiving a musical education is no longer poor, as Abreu says? A plethora of historical and contemporary photographs of beggars could show us that poor children playing musical

instruments are still poor children and may grow up to be destitute adults. [Figures 7.1 & 7.2] Realist photographers have gone further to hint at the complex ways music can turn poverty and suffering into a spectacle. [Figure 7.3] At the level of political analysis I argue in a similar vein that El Sistema effectively impoverishes policy discussions concerning culture, inequality and education. In doing so the organisation may be seen as part of a general trend which is now obscuring the public interest in many areas of education by blurring the boundary between public and private interests and diminishing the ‘publicness’ of public policy.<sup>7</sup> In strictly monetary terms, one of the results is that El Sistema commands more financial resources than the entire Ministry for Culture in Venezuela. Like many NGOs and charities the organisation is careful to manage a message, in the case of El Sistema it is that the arts can do no harm at the level of social policy and by and large they are a progressive factor. Against this false impression I argue that the Sistema model is a threat to egalitarian educational and cultural policies. Moreover the model is an example of political opportunism driven by the financial and cultural exploitation of the poor and their worsening social conditions.

**Figure 6.1** Italian Street Musicians [1877] in London by John Thomson (1837-1921)<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 7.2** Street musicians performing Palma de Mallorca, photographed by Lois Beath [2013] for her blog, *My Cruise Stories*.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 7.3** Photomontage [1934] by Karel Hájek (1900-1978).<sup>10</sup>



## **Oil and Inclusion**

Abreu has offered a fairly candid account of the combination of religious, musical and political beliefs underpinning his mission.<sup>11</sup> Politically he identifies himself most with the writer and politician Arturo Uslar Pietri (1906-2001). Seeing the dangers of an extractive mono-economy in the 1930s Pietri coined the very influential phrase '*sembrar el petróleo*' (sowing the oil) and although he moved from a Statist vision to a much more market friendly one, he argued throughout his life that Venezuela's vast oil wealth must be used for all round development.<sup>12</sup> Pietri ran unsuccessfully for president in 1961 and it was his support for Pietri's movement that Abreu says led him into being elected to the Venezuelan parliament and to various political roles including his appointment as Minister of Culture during the second presidency of Carlos Andrés Pérez from 1989 to 1993. Of all the country's presidents Pérez (1922- 2010) is the one most associated with Venezuela's boom and bust oil economy.

This precarious oil economy must be taken into account when considering 'Maestro Abreu's' paternalistic leadership, which prompts people to describe themselves as disciples and followers. Another important factor is that Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution led by Hugo Chávez (1954-2013) replicated capitalist inequalities (Dangl 2010; Ellner 2009; Martinez, Fox and Farrell 2010; Guerrero 2010). None of these left-wing analysts belittle the progress made in Venezuela under the banner of 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism.<sup>13</sup> And according to the UNESCO (2010) Education For All Development Index (EDI), the country has seen significant improvements in education. El Sistema is only one of several projects and reforms which can take part of the credit. However, to put the EDI measurement in perspective Venezuela ranks 59<sup>th</sup> and the United Kingdom 9<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 8% of pupils in the United Kingdom go to private schools.<sup>14</sup> In Venezuela the 15% of pupils found in private schools rises to 26% at high school level.<sup>15</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum are the estimated 195,000 Venezuelan children who are still not receiving primary school education.<sup>16</sup> Yet Venezuela's El Sistema is now widely regarded as an international model for improving educational equalities. Major structural inequality in Venezuela and the different history and political challenges in a country like the United Kingdom have been ignored. Undoubtedly this form of de-politicisation makes El Sistema increasingly attractive to neoliberal politicians in a time of capitalist crisis and austerity. The same accounts which propagate El Sistema as a way of improving the education system are seen by some as left-wing simply because they acknowledge inequality

as a problem that should still be addressed by the State. As the theoretical means of doing so ‘inclusion’ goes largely uncontested, allowing egalitarian educational policies and ideas of cultural autonomy to be demoted.

The dramatic move from the classical analysis of exploitation to the orthodox criticism of exclusion and the drive for inclusion is not, of course, confined to the countries considered here. Inclusion is a global policy discourse.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless the politics of resource sovereignty in Venezuela and in a dis-United Kingdom may have accelerated the implementation of inclusion as the transformative discourse advanced by contemporary social policy. In both Scotland and Venezuela oil revenue more than taxation is seen as a consensual means of protecting and supporting ‘the left hand of the state’ and this creates a degree of ideological uncertainty for the left.<sup>18</sup> The exploitation of energy resources is very broadly contested, but if there is such a thing as a short cut to socialism the redistribution of resource revenue does not appear to be it.<sup>19</sup>

From the monarchy, nuclear weapons and land reform to schooling, welfare and economic regeneration many radical policy questions in Scotland seemed to wither rather than grow in importance next to the issue of the distribution of North Sea oil wealth. Arguably the political conjuncture that may be described as resource sovereignty is particularly amenable to corporatist ideological contracts which may be difficult to undo once in place. El Sistema exemplifies these dealings whereby the political pressure for social transformation is *financially* converted into a politics more open to the influences and investments from the good-faith economy. In the opinion of one bank director all Venezuelan citizens must be united as in an orchestra.<sup>20</sup> Notwithstanding the anti-imperialist credentials of ‘socialism for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ in Venezuela, this high sounding ambition obscures what I show to be a more politically experimental and faltering form of courtship.<sup>21</sup> In financial terms this attempt to create a progressive political consensus is still based on the influential idea of sowing the oil. However the undervaluing of this finite resource by markets — via the pace of its production and supply — should produce a more radical contest of ideas first of all for oil workers, and all those involved in accidents connected to production targets, and then more broadly, in the lack of precautionary, more future centered socio-economic and environmental policies.<sup>22</sup>

In this context the discourse of social inclusion is very much a language in action that often fails to address the terms of inclusion, or ask, inclusion in what? Therefore the main issue that comes up in media reports and professional discussions of El Sistema is whether or not this model works as a mechanism of socio-economic integration for the young who would otherwise fall by the wayside were it not for Sistema-style projects. Even if the answer to this question was a resounding yes (for which there is no evidence because comparable countries without the history of El Sistema have done no worse, and sometimes fared better) there are still vital issues to consider here about the differences between artistic instrumentalism coming from above, or from below.

From Bourdieu's (1977) perspective it is precisely because capitalist economism really seeks to transform every aspect of life according to market logic, that supporters of subtle forms of plutocracy mystify culture creating networks of obligation and dependency in the process.<sup>23</sup> These aspects of the good-faith economy are articulated in cultural or artistic traditions which may, on the surface, appear to be the domain of spiritual and moral conduct rather than socio-economic mediations. However, the interesting thing about El Sistema is that in general little or no pretence is made about its paternalism or its socio-economic aims, quite the opposite. Proponents of the organisation stress that it is a social project much more than an arts project and on this basis it receives funding directly from governments and banks as well as arms-length arts agencies and private foundations and patrons. It is argued that music making in orchestras alleviates poverty by promoting community cohesion and encouraging the virtues of cooperation, dedication, and mutual respect. Again in the words of Abreu: 'I realised one of the most efficient ways to fight poverty was to introduce excluded children and young people to musical education (...) and turn their families and communities into our allies.'<sup>24</sup>

### **The victory of El Sistema and its claims**

It is estimated that Abreu has received some sixty prizes and awards internationally.<sup>25</sup> In Venezuela his project has grown to roughly 285 'núcleos' or ensembles around the country. These provide free access to classical instruments and music tuition for somewhere between 310,000 to 370,000 children.<sup>26</sup> To many people El Sistema, not the public school system, appears to be the means of delivering a musical education to children. Critics of the organisation such as the well known Venezuelan folk singer Cecilia Todd regard the organisation as an aesthetically homogenising project that encourages the development of a robotic musical culture.<sup>27</sup> Following on from this sort of criticism a project Sistema Alma



Llanera devoted to folk music was set up. Its status is in doubt and it presently appears to be a tokenistic project. So the question of what ought to be the appropriate structure for musical education and how to educate children about musical diversity remains. However it is not socio-aesthetic issues that figure in major funding assessments of El Sistema. Rather it is argued that the organisation combats crime because regular music tuition keeps the youth off the streets during after school hours when they would otherwise be at risk of becoming victims of violent crime or becoming involved in deviancy. This rationale has often been promoted by Abreu. For example he claims that ‘a child who is given a violin will not pick up a gun because music produces an irreversible transformation in a child (...) he may become a doctor, study law, or teach literature, but what music gives him remains indelibly part of who he is forever.’<sup>28</sup> Abreu also declares that ‘the most holy of human rights is the right to art’.<sup>29</sup> On the back of such authoritative sounding statements it is frequently implied that El Sistema is an integral part of the battle against many varieties of deviancy among the poor and it advances their cultural rights.

These socially instrumental claims have given El Sistema an important place in the repertoire of contemporary inclusion policy and allowed its proponents to lever increases in funding and to gain political prestige unlike any other artistic or cultural venture. Indeed the conductor Gustavo Dudamel compares the national youth orchestra at the peak of El Sistema to the Venezuelan national flag. There are powerful reasons to think of the organisation in such terms. Not least that the results of all the other inclusion programmes supported by Venezuela’s revolutionary governments, including the eradication of illiteracy, are harshly criticised by the opponents of *Chavismo* at home and abroad for their superficial nature and misleading use of statistics.<sup>30</sup> Although Abreu was occasionally criticised for associating too closely with the Chávez governments, the twin claims made for El Sistema, namely that it is an effective means of combating poverty and crime and it supports human rights in the field of culture have not been subjected to the same sort of scrutiny by the Venezuelan government’s increasingly vociferous opponents.

The welfare economics philosopher Amartya Sen reminds us that human rights do not only have an instrumental significance, they have a constitutive importance too.<sup>31</sup> People have the right to participate in culture for its own sake. In itself this has instrumental significance because human rights at the level of culture entail the right to *change* culture rather than to

merely reproduce its consecrated forms. Looked at from this perspective Abreu's idea that 'anything good, noble and praiseworthy must be reproducible (...) so what's good for one underprivileged child has to be good for all underprivileged children' risks reducing children to the status of performing monkeys.<sup>32</sup> Despite the frequent references to human rights issues concerning freedom of expression in Venezuela, usually raised by the political right, increased official support for El Sistema has escaped such scrutiny. To understand the reasons for this double standard, and the real depth of the issues that the organisation claims to address, we need to appreciate how the organisation's rationale has interacted with political power.

Venezuelan politics was determined by military strong men throughout the first six decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The political field thereafter is marked by the connected vices of corruption and what is called excessive presidentialism. The latter reduces politics to the power of presidents and makes for a poor weapon against corruption. No matter how honestly it is used the office and the power of the president cannot impose a meritocracy on society which in many instances prefers personal bonds and clientelism to capitalist hopes for relative transparency and an open market. Even writers, who stress consensus about the liberal democratisation process dating back to the 1958 *Punto Fijo* pact also emphasise the crisis of legitimacy which was to destabilise the political class, the business and banking elites and organised labour.<sup>33</sup> All these established arenas of power have been tainted by corruption. The political context for Abreu's project is this growing crisis of legitimacy which turned into a major crisis of governance in the mid 1990s.

In the midst of this highly polarised polity — represented by profoundly distrusted elites — the classical orchestral form made inclusive by El Sistema looks like an invitation to a near perfect meritocracy. This is voiced by a young women violinist filmed for a promotional documentary about the organisation who says: "There is no difference between classes here, nor white or black, [or] if you have money or not. Simply, if you are talented, if you have the vocation and the will to be here, you'll get in, and you'll share with us and make music."<sup>34</sup> In an insightful dissertation Gustavo Borchert (2012), a former orchestra musician, notes that El Sistema's advocates identify the organisation with meritocracy, and regard meritocracy as the country's path to progress.<sup>35</sup> However, contrary to the suggestions that El Sistema has successfully institutionalised meritocracy, research by the ethnomusicologist Geoff Baker (2014) reveals more of the murky patronage system described as *palanca* (string-pulling) in



the organisation. As one former Sistema musician told Baker; ‘Just like there’s betrayal at work, there’s betrayal in the orchestra. Just like there’s *palanca* at work, there’s *palanca* in the orchestra.’<sup>36</sup>

During his tenure as Venezuela’s President between 1998-2013 Hugo Chávez increased support for Abreu’s project using the presidential budget derived from the nation’s oil revenues. This support for what was seen as an aesthetically conservative project was not uncontroversial. Given the objections raised by artists such as Cecilia Todd, mentioned above, it ought to be asked how Chávez’s unexpected support for El Sistema fitted the wider political field that brought him to power. Leslie Gates (2010) study of Chávez’s election in 1998 shows that he was aided by members of the business elite who expected to have favours returned in the form of government contracts. The people I was able to interview in the cultural sector in Caracas see Chávez’s support for Abreu’s project not so much as an example of this clientelism, but as the result of skilful lobbying at the elite level. Nothing revealed here would contradict that interpretation. Nevertheless in Venezuela and elsewhere there are few means for politicians to legally reciprocate support received from business but, as I go on to discuss support for the pyramid-like form of the classical orchestra is one of them.<sup>37</sup>

From the European conquest of South America in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the introduction of African slaves, the blending of musical traditions on the American continent has been the norm. What is unusual about El Sistema is the revival of the cultural conquest which attempted to discipline this musical production through the combination of spirituality and commerce. For the early Jesuit missionaries who set up the ‘reductions’, semi-autonomous trading settlements in the 16th century, the Baroque orchestra provided a powerful means to convert the continent to Catholicism and European notions of civilisation.<sup>38</sup> For Voltaire (1694-1778) these missions appeared to be an atonement for the brutality of imperial conquest and nothing less than ‘the spectacle of the world.’<sup>39</sup> However Abreu’s lifelong project to turn the poor into the allies of ruling belief system today does not require the creation of such protected economic communities. Rather the orchestra has become an idealised symbol of business community’s belief in meritocracy and its belief in itself.

Listening to Abreu's narratives the historical lineage and the contemporary business of classical music seems unquestionably 'noble'. Almost unmentionable in this context is the 18<sup>th</sup> century craze for *castrati* singers; this phenomenon involved castrating thousands of boys annually in the early decades of the century with lethal consequences for up to 80% of them.<sup>40</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the close relationship between classical music and Nazi genocide is sordid at best.<sup>41</sup> Today the skilled labour of entire orchestras is turned into the artistic reputation and financial capital of individual conductors and in this sense the visible performance of classical music is analogous to capitalist enterprise. It is no less an outgrowth of Baroque socio-economics for that. Musicians are stakeholders and although industrial actions are not unheard of they are rare and tend to take place *in extremis*. The historically structured tension of the organisational form sometimes surfaces, for example the virtuoso violinist Nigel Kennedy condemns conductors for greed and opportunism.<sup>42</sup>

Such public outbursts, which must include the dissenting voices in Baker's ethnography, mentioned above, belie a more deeply felt sense of vocation and apprenticeship within an avowedly meritocratic system. Without such a work ethic the hierarchical structuring of orchestras could not be so readily reproduced. That it is reproduced so vividly in Venezuela is perfectly in keeping with Latin America's colonial heritage. To 'make America' the youth of the Spanish and Portuguese merchant class in the 19<sup>th</sup> century worked very long days under close supervision of the *patrón*. Salaries were also given over to invest in the business as he chose, all in hope of eventually receiving greater rewards and status in return for total dedication to the enterprise.<sup>43</sup> The same sense of dedication finds a latter day echo in El Sistema's motto, *tocar y luchar* (to play and to fight). The first obvious victory for Abreu's project took place on April 30th 1975 in Venezuela's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Domingo Sánchez Bor who played in Abreu's orchestra performing at the ministry that night recalls; 'we knew it was for real, all that about the scholarships, the chances for work, our careers as musicians, it was all possible, it had come true. That evening we had found the purpose we needed and which we had searched for so hard.'<sup>44</sup>

That El Sistema fosters devotion and propagates the idea of meritocracy in a country bedeviled by corruption and crime is not in doubt. But does the organisation also foster solidarity and function like a sort of social glue as its proponents insist? There is a barrage of similarly anecdotal bits of evidence coming from institutional studies and official reports as well as journalists' articles, promotional books, and perhaps most influentially, from

documentary films, which are used to suggest that it does. The uncomfortable fact consistently brushed aside by these flattering assessments — some of which will be examined here — is that crime in Venezuela has steadily risen alongside the rise of El Sistema. Moreover the increased support given to the organisation by Chávez did nothing to abate a steep rise in violent crime between 1999 and 2011. According to data sets for this period the murder rate climbed from 25% to 45.1%.<sup>45</sup> In schools, where one might expect the organisation to have the greatest positive impact, the occurrence of serious violence and killings is equally alarming.<sup>46</sup> If El Sistema appears unable to stem the tide, then it ought to be asked if the organisation it is not actually part of the problems that have gone hand in hand with its growth in Venezuela?

Both supporters and opponents of the Bolivarian revolution recognise ‘a culture of criminality’ as a real social issue in Venezuela.<sup>47</sup> It is seen as a weak point in the revolutionary process, the effects of which are exploited by the opposition. Apart from supporting Sistema there is hardly any agreement about the policies which would be appropriate to meet this challenge. Over the same period of increased violence, data sets show that extreme poverty, unemployment and inequality have fallen. Many criminologists would expect these indicators to be accompanied by a fall in crime. The fact that the opposite is the case when it comes to violent crimes such as murder and kidnapping is a paradox which created a discursive vacuum at the level of policy debates.<sup>48</sup> Consequently the message that the sort of social cohesion fostered by El Sistema is a means to reduce crime went largely unquestioned. But one of the organisation’s greatest victories is the ability to distort the representation of such problems to fit its own purposes.

An example is the film called *El Sistema*, one of the typically anti-realist documentaries which promote Abreu’s worldview.<sup>49</sup> In this film the two boys who are trumpeters and firm friends reflect proudly on the development of their local orchestra but one pauses unexpectedly to comment on the problem of percussionists. Percussionists, as the boys seem to agree, are *bochincheros* or rowdies. Unlike the young trumpeter who has spoken of his career ambitions, these ‘slackers’ and ‘troublemakers’ as they are also described are too disorganised to get on in life. At this discordant point in film’s message of orchestras delivering social cohesion in a crime ridden society, the filmmakers cut to shots of a bird of prey flying over Caracas. Following this menacing symbolism, Abreu is brought back into the film to make the point that El Sistema is incomplete and the number of Venezuelan

children touched by the project will rise to a million in the next decade. In this way what viewers have just witnessed is brushed aside. It is as if the answer to the social fractures created by using music to instil the belief in meritocracy and transforming play into labour is to proceed with more of the same with even greater gusto.

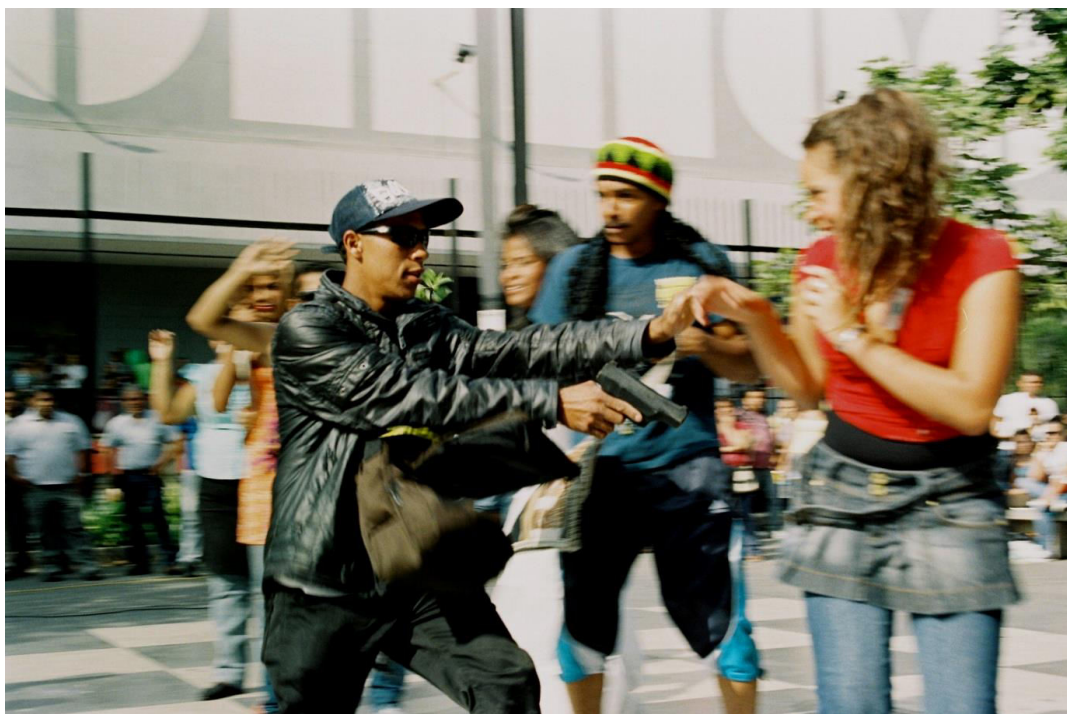
What's wrong with this picture? Without recourse to Bourdieu's sociology, why is it so easy to dismiss the social divisions which El Sistema can be seen deepening, even within a single orchestra? Although revolutionary leftists recognise that the Bolivarian revolution has traditional social democratic aims they argue that in the face of neoliberal hegemony these become revolutionary aims. In Britain the relationship between the erosion of social democracy and the rise of meritocracy was first examined by the sociologist Michael Young (1915-2002). Young coined the term meritocracy in his 1958 book *The Rise of the Meritocracy* where he formulated its core principle as 'IQ + Effort = Merit'. As a social democrat who had served in Britain's 1945 Labour government, Young was also able to recognise that the meritocratic ethos was a ruthless one. Not only does meritocracy blur the boundaries between labour and play for the sake of success but it reinforces inequality. Because people are made to feel they deserve the advancement and privileges that are in fact delivered by capitalism their toleration for structural inequality may know no bounds. For example, in very novel satirical terms for a sociologist, Young envisaged Britain in 2034 as a country where the most promising children of the poor would be purchased by the wealthy to boost the prospects and opportunities of their own families. In this way he illustrated the creation of a patrimonial system taking shape under the auspices of Britain's social democracy.

More recently the French Marxist philosopher Étienne Balibar (1991) has argued that the dilution of socialism into excessively nationalist forms of social democracy means that the issue of racist attitudes — often laid at the door of the petit bourgeoisie by leftist historians — must be fundamentally rethought in terms of 'class racism'. Instead of looking at which social class is most supportive of racist ideas Balibar argues we should be alert to the spread of petit bourgeois thought about class and culture.<sup>50</sup> The context for Young's pioneering critique was the emergence of 'the opportunity state' in the 1950s and 60s and the rise of correspondingly technocratic attitudes. There can be no real meritocracy without equality. So the perennial moral quandary for those who believe in meritocracy is how to reconcile personal advancement with political, economic or institutional reproduction of inequality. As

Young saw it, people look to the State to equalise opportunities while at the same time looking for advantages for themselves and their children. Although these critical insights about the corrupting aspects of meritocracy emerged from Britain's social-democratic project they clearly have a much wider relevance.<sup>51</sup>

The basic formula essential to meritocracy — intelligence plus effort — is not confined to legal or virtuous transactions in society, as Young realised the ideology of meritocracy promotes a dubious public morality. Murder rate statistics in Venezuela rather blankly describe a social reality where armed robbery and kidnappings are the routine facts of life and death. Few people, especially in Caracas, have not been touched by these crimes the successful execution of which may well demand intelligence plus effort plus daring. The life of an orchestra is about as far removed from physical daring as it is possible to be. As I have suggested there are good reasons to see El Sistema hardening such cultural distinctions, and contributing to a widespread discourse whereby crime is shown primarily to be a consequence of cardinal sins at the bottom of society [**Figures 7.4 – 7.5**], rather than the organisation of crime —often disguised by cultured behavior — which goes to the very top of society.<sup>52</sup> In other words El Sistema is not as portrayed, part of the solution to crime, rather it is part of the problem.

**Figures 7.4 & 7.5** Caracas, 2013, street performance about crime and sin by an evangelical church and onlookers (below). Author's photographs.



Like other resource rich nations Venezuela has long been a hive of debt-creation for lenders from North America and Europe. Some investigative studies trace the role of money laundering in development lending.<sup>53</sup> Thanks to greater public awareness concerning the dynamics of usury and speculation, since its partial exposure by global financial crisis, and partly too because of revelations about white-elephant development schemes that were sold to countries like Venezuela, the age of obscurity concerning the *demimonde* of finance capitalism may be drawing to close. There is certainly much less emphasis put on grandiose infrastructure projects which are viewed with greater suspicion. However, calls for the systemic reform of central banking and the international financial institutions, and a raft of other initiatives designed to democratise socio-economic development, seem muted rather than amplified by the divisive politics of austerity. In the wake of repeated debt-crises lending is increasingly justified on the basis that the end results reach the poor and directly transforms their lives. In an often-quoted evaluation of their 2007 loan of 150 million US dollars to the Venezuelan government to build regional centres for El Sistema, the Inter American Development Bank (IDB)<sup>54</sup> estimated that in the long term every dollar loaned would save the Venezuelan public purse 36 cents by increasing employment opportunities and lowering crime levels. The basic selling point for this lucrative loan in aid of Sistema's services to society can be crudely, but not inaccurately, summed-up in the sales talk of 'Buy More Pay Less'.

The IDB's (2007) projection is based on the stated results of El Sistema in reducing school dropout rate from 26.4% to 6.9%. This positive effect is underpinned by the parental need for safe and free childcare after-school. El Sistema provides this only by default. This basic effect on school attendance may of course be replicated and improved on by other less regimented means, not all of which require funding. This includes the need for democratisation and responsiveness in the school system as various educational reforms in Venezuela demonstrate.<sup>55</sup> The IDB report does not discuss such educational options in what is an opaque comparative framework. From the basic effect on school attendance ascribed to El Sistema, the bank's cost-benefit evaluation instead goes on to make sweeping projections based on a slur, namely that unless children join an orchestra they will be much more likely to become criminals. As the IDB report states, El Sistema's main objective is 'the development of human capital, training in civic values and good behaviour, the creation of

future employment opportunities, and offering alternatives for the non-criminal use of free time (...).<sup>56</sup>

Since 2007 other credit lines have been opened to Venezuela to bolster El Sistema's infrastructure, giving the organisation a degree of permanence that could outlive attempts to reform educational and cultural provision. In line with the IDB's human capital rationale for tackling problems of exclusion the Latin American Development Bank (CAF) loaned 350 million US dollars for the construction of El Sistema's new headquarters in Caracas due to open in 2017.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, the authors of a 2012 CAF report on *Public Finance for Development* recognise the historical linkage between increased taxation, increased State action and greater political debate and accountability — a nexus which is identified with socio-economic development in Europe and North America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>58</sup> On this comparative basis the report highlights the deficiency of taxation systems in Latin America (especially where States rely on resource revenues) and the consequential deficits in civic consciousness and State accountability in the provision of public goods.

However, the picture the 2012 CAF report paints of historical development of these issues in the countries of advanced capitalism is all but denuded of the traces of ideological conflict over the social contract and issues of socio-economic justice, despite the obvious effects of two world wars on policy and public attitudes. By neglecting the role of ideological struggle over the role of the State in developing education, welfare and public enterprise in Europe and North America, not to mention the history of 'military Keynesianism' in the United States, the CAF report blithely envisages a very different process of consensus building for progressive taxation in Latin America. Unsurprisingly, for a major lender that promotes external investment and free trade, this is not seen in the light of the varieties of anti-capitalism but rather on investing in human capital. In the medium term at least this is made to appear preferable to raising tax revenues.

Although El Sistema is acclaimed as a social project by major funding assessments, these assessments fail to evaluate the organisation in the same broad terms. Thus El Sistema has not been looked at critically as an essentially private inroad into public education; one that substitutes a necessarily diverse musical education in children's early years for what in many cases is an intensive training which borders on indoctrination. Given the range of socio-economic benefits which bankers promise from the continued development of this project —



which has in fact been the sonorous accompaniment to the social problems they identify — I will now turn to holistic academic and grass roots perspectives on the related issues of crime and cultural democracy in Venezuela. I argue that the notion of social action advanced by El Sistema is profoundly invalid both as a means to combat crime and as an articulation of cultural rights. It is detrimental to the understanding of both and hinders genuine public policy.

### **Critical perspectives on culture and crime**

The IDB's rationale for its 150 million USD loan represents the most worrying victory for Abreu's ideas about orchestral music constituting an efficient means to combat poverty and crime. The fact that most poor people are not actually criminals appears to be overridden by the old fear — so prevalent until the 20<sup>th</sup> century — that potentially most are. Given the history of banditry the fear of 'underclass' violence has never been totally irrational. However as the historian Eric Hobsbawm (2000) shows in his influential book, *Bandits*, their numbers have always been a very small proportion of the populations effected. In Columbia, during a particularly murderous episode of *la violencia* in the early 1960s, only one person in a thousand was a member of an armed group. Even in such extreme situations statistical evidence shows, how unusual it is for poor people to pick up guns.<sup>59</sup>

The motivations among the minority who do pursue violence are complicated. Pathological crime is not devoid of meritocratic and ethical evaluation. Such reasoning supports a powerful Robin Hood myth and real violent crimes are measured against it, and therefore relativised by it. Moreover the same reasoning may be shared by violent criminals and law-abiding citizens alike. Whatever social injustices might be used to explain or justify brutality tend also to be reinforced by punishment in corrupt criminal justice systems. Jorge Luis Alfonso, an ex-convict in Caracas, remembers sewing up his mouth with a needle and thread in one prison protest. Now a poet with a public sector job thanks to recent government policy, he recalled his self-inflicted wounds as a necessary and almost unremarkable part of the hunger strike he pursued with some of his fellow inmates.<sup>60</sup> In the last analysis it is quite absurd to think that a sub-cultural elite — one made up of the very small number people who are prepared to secure their advancement through physical daring and the use of violence — could be diverted from such a course of action by the expansion of musical training among the children of the poor. Moreover as I go on to discuss here the spread of a project that

falsely promises upward mobility as a solution for criminal deviancy is, quite literally, a *fatal* diversion from other cultural activities capable of tackling the real roots of crime.

Despite El Sistema's rhetoric of transformation the organisation focuses on children, not families or communities as a whole, or the need for structural egalitarian reform in education. Indeed, the goal of *saving* children from their social circumstances is blatant and although it stigmatises communities, it makes El Sistema ideologically amenable to different politicians and governments. The idea that children need to be introduced to an entirely different culture to the one they know is both implicit and explicit in the organisation's mission. When it comes to criminality the message is equally clear. Popular culture and music does not merely reflect, reiterate or glamorise social malaise rather they are aspects of a criminal pathology and an obstruction to social mobility. Therefore the potentially deviant outlook of disadvantaged children must be sanitised and remade according to more respectable and law-abiding mores. This project of sanitising culture is no novelty of course. It articulates a 'class racism'<sup>61</sup> which has crypto-fascist and outright fascist roots that are entwined with those of economic liberalism, but my purpose is not to trace these linkages here.<sup>62</sup> Nor will I deal with El Sistema's work in prisons, the rigidity of which is critiqued by Borchert (2012). What I stress here is that the ideas El Sistema promote are damaging because they detract from genuinely effective attempts to combat cultural inequality, and the social relations underpinning crime and violence in society.

Critical realist criminologists today regard crime as a refraction of the structures of power and inequality in society. In examining the causes of crime such research regards inequality *within* disadvantaged groups as just as important to analyse as the more obvious disparities of class, race and gender. Indeed critical realists have accused the political left and right of not taking crime seriously as something which is part of the neoliberal package, namely the pro-market and anti-welfare, anti-planning and anti-regulation policies being articulated globally. William Wilson's (1987) book *The Truly Disadvantaged* was a major influence on this school of thought. Wilson starts off by examining the paradoxical deterioration of Afro-American communities in US cities after the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Wilson finds that communities were made weaker by new opportunities for upward mobility which had the effect of dividing populations increasingly identified in terms of colour, not of class.<sup>63</sup> How do these realist insights compare with the experience of Venezuelans?

Ricardo Romero was born in Caracas in 1968. Romero has conducted writing workshops in prisons over several years and influenced by anarchist political thought he has become an ardent critic of the criminal justice system. In conversation he illustrates the failure of the system not so much through its many documented abuses but with the hypothetical assertion that if every prisoner in Venezuela was released at once the effect on the crime rate would be minimal.<sup>64</sup> The reason Romero gives is that crime is organised vertically and the powerful organisers and their corrupt collaborators are hardly ever to be found in Venezuela's prisons. Romero's view that widespread corruption and organised crime go hand in hand is shared by many Venezuelans and is one of the reasons grass roots activists put so much trust in Hugo Chávez but did not extend this trust to his cabinet or his government officials.<sup>65</sup>

The political complexity of *Chávismo* as a social movement is evident in the various community media organisations that have benefited from government support and which are essential organs of revolutionary consciousness. Petare is a well known poor *barrio* to the east of Caracas and is home to Petare TV, one of Venezuela's community media organisations run on egalitarian principles with the aim of overcoming divisions of labour. One of the station's founders is Charles Mendez who was born in Petare in 1963. Mendez says it has made very little difference to the organisation whether the local mayor is a *Chávista* or not, the station has been in conflict with both. One of Petare TV's community journalists was murdered in 2007 during the course of an investigation into corruption. As a result of threats at the time some local programme makers gave up their involvement with community broadcasting. However, such experiences have also hardened the resolve of Petare TV, particularly in their resistance to the idea that 'culture' needs to be brought to the people of the *barrio*. Although people at Petare TV are tolerant of El Sistema, largely because of Chávez's support for the latter, Mendez says that if Petare TV is to survive and develop it will be because the community gains a better critical understanding and 'intelligence' about its own life and cultural affairs, partly through local programme making and partly through civic-social networks that can defend the genuine interests of the community.<sup>66</sup> Along with defeats there have been significant local victories in confronting the rise of violence.<sup>67</sup>

Petare TV is not a parochial cultural project. One of the station's innovations has been to compare and contrast reporting from the world's media, creating a more media savvy

environment where there is greater awareness of the politics of broadcasting and the issues of media manipulation. There has been a considerable amount of academic and activist writing looking at the development of community media in Venezuela.<sup>68</sup> The rather fraught relations of organisations like Catia TV and Radio Bemba with the commercial right-leaning media on the one hand and the “official” revolution on the other are examined in a volume edited by Smilde and Hellinger (2011). As the tragic murder of one of Petare TV journalists would also suggest the situation and autonomy of community media projects is politically precarious. Much of their funding is project based or comes via government advertising.

Among the factors that Mendez sees influencing crime in Petare is the overspill of the long-standing conflict in Columbia with the result that paramilitary narco-gangs have effective control in some areas and paid hit-men operate with impunity more broadly. This is a politically volatile subject but cultural organisations like Petare TV are in the position to offer important insights on crime and violence. They provide arenas for communities to discuss the interconnected nature of social problems that tend to be taken in isolation and become overly charged by ideology, as the rationale of El Sistema shows. **[Figures 7.6 -7.7]** According to Mendez crime has been used opportunistically by the right-wing opposition who seek to benefit electorally from the social malaise. However he makes it clear that there is much more to consider than political opportunism at election times. Simplistic accounts which collapse poverty, crime and ‘bad behaviour’ into one phenomenon make matters much worse, because once such a discursive environment is created, the real dynamics of political power, local authority and criminality are harder to confront. As with El Sistema areas like Petare are naturalised in the public consciousness as breeding grounds for criminality in terminal decline instead of being regarded as spaces of commercial, political and cultural exploitation. The latter may come in many forms from respectable international lenders, to narco-commerce to the proponents of cultural and educational transformation from above. In different ways each contributes to the cheapening of life in places like Petare.

What is the potential for the development of community media as a countervailing force? For community media to prosper in Venezuela in any significant democratic form its position as a public good, and its independence from both business and the government of the day, would need to be strengthened. If the development of human capital was an area of potential consensus building for public finance as it appears in CAF bank report discussed above, then

the funding prospects for independent community media projects would be good. However, the logic of human capital is at one with capitalist economism and is anything but neutral.

**Figures 7.6 & 7.7** Caracas, 2013, onlookers during the news digest on *Petare al Dia*, an open air studio broadcast in Petare. Author's photographs.



Whether support for community media was raised from credit lines, resource revenues, or taxation (possibly on corporate advertising campaigns), in their present form people's organisations like Petare TV represent an obvious challenge to the socio-political status quo. If there is to be redistribution of public finance through culture, then the sort of social action promoted by El Sistema is infinitely more attractive in the eyes of capital. The meritocratic discourse of equal opportunities for social climbing is usefully devoid of the actually existing egalitarianism to be found in the self-organisation of certain community media stations. While democratically run community media projects with complex educational and cultural functions articulate the constitutive, and therefore unpredictable aspects of human rights in culture, El Sistema focuses instead on narrower economic goals. It should be no surprise then that lenders want to make the organisation more concrete — quite literally — and distort evidence to make the case for investment.

Using the example of Petare TV, I have argued here that important and courageous cultural projects run along egalitarian lines are less likely to prosper as a result of El Sistema and the economism articulated by its powerful backers. It may be objected that this is a gloomy and entirely speculative projection. Given the atomisation of communities in the United States and elsewhere, it is much less speculative than the sweeping cost-benefit projections made by bankers to support their lending for Abreu's organisation. As Romero suggests above, the petty criminal may be fodder to a criminal elite, but that does not mean the poor are all potential criminals waiting to be led into a life of crime. Violent criminals are an even smaller minority, and they may be about as thinly spread in society as musicians. In other words, there are two different subcultures and the first one won't magically disappear by boosting the numbers of the second one, any more than increasing the numbers of orchestral musicians might diminish the popularity of gangsta rap. In Venezuela and elsewhere the real issue is the danger faced by those who have the courage to oppose powerful criminal networks.

The egalitarian and autonomous character of organisations like Petare TV is typically precarious and is always at risk. As with the case of the Craigmillar Festival Society discussed in the previous chapter, community organisations such as Petare TV are subject to financial and institutional interventions which can negate social solidarity by turning civil society into the sphere of liberal competition for top-down funding and patronage. In the competition for funds, politically unquestioning organisations like El Sistema have an obvious fighting advantage.<sup>69</sup> But the good-faith terms of competition even for relatively

small amounts of funding, may distort demands, and influence the priorities of more radical projects.<sup>70</sup>

Oscar Sotillo Meneses is a founder of *La Mancha*, (The Stain) a respected left-wing and somewhat avant-garde cultural journal published in Caracas since 2002.<sup>71</sup> The organisation also broadcasts a radio show and maintains good relations with a variety of leftist cultural projects and groupings including Petare TV. Sotillo thinks the political phenomenon of *Chavismo* carried on by President Nicolás Maduro can be roughly divided into two halves; those who think El Sistema is wonderful and those who think it is awful. Describing the institutions and networks of high culture he says;

*the artists and support workers in those institutions have the advantage of knowing what culture is. It is things that they've been doing for decades and centuries and that's also the advantage which the political right possess. Whereas, we on the left are never sure what culture is because we're in the process of trying to remake it.*<sup>72</sup>

In terms of social milieu *La Mancha* may be regarded as more of a bohemian organisation than a bourgeois one. Typically there is a high degree of scepticism about the aesthetics of consecrated culture and conventional upward mobility among its network of poets, writers, artists and musicians. In these circles El Sistema is regarded like a 'mafia' operating in the cultural field. However, the left project of remaking culture, as Sotillo puts it, is a lot more attractive when people have the intellectual and personal respect of their peers in the cultural arena and some key administrators or politicians. It is a much more arduous process in the face of professional snobbery, political violence and poverty. It is this risky moral space between political virtue and aesthetic virtue which El Sistema drives further apart by promoting orchestras as a means to deliver a peaceful unified citizenry.<sup>73</sup>

### **Making legible citizens from Venezuela to Scotland**

Two major governmental research projects in Scotland have followed in the footsteps of the buy-more-pay-less lending rationale discussed above, GEN (2011) and GCPH (2015). These reports also envisage massive savings and social benefits to be accrued from investment in the Sistema model, as represented by Sistema Scotland. If it can be said that Sistema demotes the significance of a broad musical and therefore a broader cultural education, this is focused on those who are least able to resist — the poor. The discourse of inclusion in Britain can



mask this rather unsightly fact by making access more important than the complexity of values and the politics of choice. What is most striking about the musical education at Britain's elite Eton College is not just the excellent facilities, but its aesthetic pluralism by comparison with what Sistema offers.<sup>74</sup> Although choice is the thing that appears to be valued most under advanced capitalism, the choices available to the poor are not dealt with in properly comparative terms in the above reports.

The Scouting movement is another useful point of comparison overlooked by the governmental research projects devoted to Sistema Scotland.<sup>75</sup> From a comparative perspective it is possible to see that what Abreu's model promotes in place of a broad musical education are the same values and 'pastoral care' fostered by organisations like the faith-based Boys Brigade founded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and Scouting organisations founded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Praiseworthy in some ways, perhaps, but an unreliable instrument of social policy, these organisations which encourage outdoor activities are in decline, at least in Britain. Alongside teaching cooperation and encouraging self-esteem and aspiration (the same values promoted by Sistema) the Scouting movement preceded Sistema in the attempt to mould young people into citizens that will be legible, or comprehensible, to States. In the eyes of the State this is what has been most attractive about these traditional youth organisations.<sup>76</sup> As quasi-military quasi-spiritual institutions they are in many respects more conservative, and more government friendly, than organised religion *per se*. Although not devoid of internal politics they have been ornaments of State power. Notwithstanding the benefits of outdoor activities, the military sense of conformity they promote may be seen as a weakness from a democratic point of view. Likewise Sistema does very little to make the State more politically comprehensible to citizens.<sup>77</sup>

Sistema Scotland is an arts project for all to see. However by proclaiming itself as a social project it seems to escape official evaluation as an education in music.<sup>78</sup> A prime mover in the creation of Sistema Scotland was Richard Holloway, the former Bishop of Edinburgh who has called himself an 'after-religionist.' Holloway was able to use his position as the last chair of the Scottish Arts Council (as the organisation was being dissolved) to lever support for Sistema Scotland's pilot project called Big Noise.<sup>79</sup> This was established in Raploch, a regeneration area of Stirling with a high percentage of post-industrial social ills including unemployment, poor health, crime, and alcohol and drug abuse. Average life expectancy here is reported to be in the forties.<sup>80</sup> Typically Stirling's regeneration strategy hinges on



promoting the knowledge economy, tourism, property development and retailing.<sup>81</sup> Set in a naturally attractive semi-rural area, Raploch has been marked out for private property investment and — in the parlance of urban studies — gentrification. Page one of the GEN (2011) report commissioned by the Scottish government states that ‘Sistema Scotland aims to work in areas where the need is greatest, focusing on communities characterised by high levels of deprivation such as unemployment, crime, anti-social behaviour and poor community cohesion.’ Six pages later, one of the reasons given for locating Sistema Scotland’s Big Noise project in Raploch, Stirling, is that ‘the strong sense of community [there] was seen as providing valuable social capital on which Big Noise could be built.’<sup>82</sup>

This self-contradictory report neglects almost all the research literature that would allow for a balanced evaluation of Sistema’s attempt to shift public policy ‘from crisis management to prevention.’<sup>83</sup> The report uses rather deceptive language claiming that the Sistema project is ‘fully’ and ‘totally’ inclusive.<sup>84</sup> On other pages it tells us that the project reaches 80% of Raploch’s children in three schools and a nursery.<sup>85</sup> Of course the only thing that can really be said to be fully inclusive in this context is the compulsory education system onto which Sistema is latched. For the report’s authors this represents the unresolved problem of disaggregating Sistema’s ‘Big Noise’ project from what is done or made possible by the existing structures and agencies in Raploch. Equally problematic, although this time unacknowledged by the researchers, are the deficiencies and unevenness of Scotland’s public education system which make private schooling an attractive option for parents with money. The structuring of questionnaires designed for evaluation by parents, children and others touched by Sistema appear similarly rigged in favour of the organisation. What one could reasonably expect to be the key research issue, namely how music should be taught, is left entirely out of the frame despite the success of other models.<sup>86</sup>

Very similar oversights and contradictions can be found in a high-powered collaborative report published by Glasgow Centre for Population and Health (GCPH 2015).<sup>87</sup> The fields of culture and of education are collapsed and what social science can tell us about culture and the reproduction of inequality disappears. In its place such governmental reports deploy logic models; the theoretical foundations of which are in rational actor theory. This means that the knowledge, cultural experiences and social virtues fostered by Sistema are taken as rational outcomes rather than the terrain of subjective relations and loyalties.<sup>88</sup> Questions of what

constitutes the essentials of musical education in a supposedly multi-cultural society, and in the age of rapidly evolving electronic technologies are ignored. These are extraordinary oversights.<sup>89</sup> As with the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) report, discussed above, the Scottish reports project financial savings which appear to have zero social or cultural costs. Lacking the quantitative evidence which music partners, local authorities, and schools are looking for, GCPH admits that a ‘high level of investment (...) is being made on the basis of “good faith”’.<sup>90</sup> As I have argued throwing orchestras at the poor does not just miss the target, it actually makes matters worse by misrepresenting the problems.

Sistema seeks to be a ‘21<sup>st</sup> century charity’ drawing from a mixture of public and private money.<sup>91</sup> If properly regarded as a political project this admixture of funding agendas and incentives which can already be seen blurring lines of accountability, have the potential to strongly influence, if not transform what remains of egalitarianism in public education. The Sistema model, quite unashamedly, seeks to take up time and collectivise children’s out of school life under the discipline of a conductor’s baton. This deeply conservative and pro-business agenda which draws in international loans at commercial rates should be much more controversial than it is. However, in the GEN and GCPH reports the model is seen to be developing the right sort of transferable skills and attitudes for competition and labour in Scotland’s post-industrial economy supposedly based on knowledge and creativity. Therefore it becomes desirable to merge labour and play. The critical meanings of both education and free time appear subsumed by a policy discourse which aims to mould the right sort of citizens on the one hand, and to blur the distinction between public and private educational provision on the other. Followed to its logical ends the policy discourse helps turn the State into a buyer of private educational services.

Even if the thin end of the privatisation wedge is ideologically acceptable to the public the shortcomings in governmental/academic research published by GCPH are still worrying. They become a little clearer by comparison with a collaborative academic study published by the Scottish Royal Academy of Music and Drama, now the *Royal Conservatoire of Scotland* (SSKET 2009). Based on a series of twenty meetings this much more tentative report examines the capacity for knowledge exchange among the different interest groups in and around Raploch. The SSKET report reveals various tensions between Sistema Scotland’s ‘missionary’ like agenda and concerns of local people who do raise structural issues about educational and cultural provision and who are not rational actors blind to the subjectivities

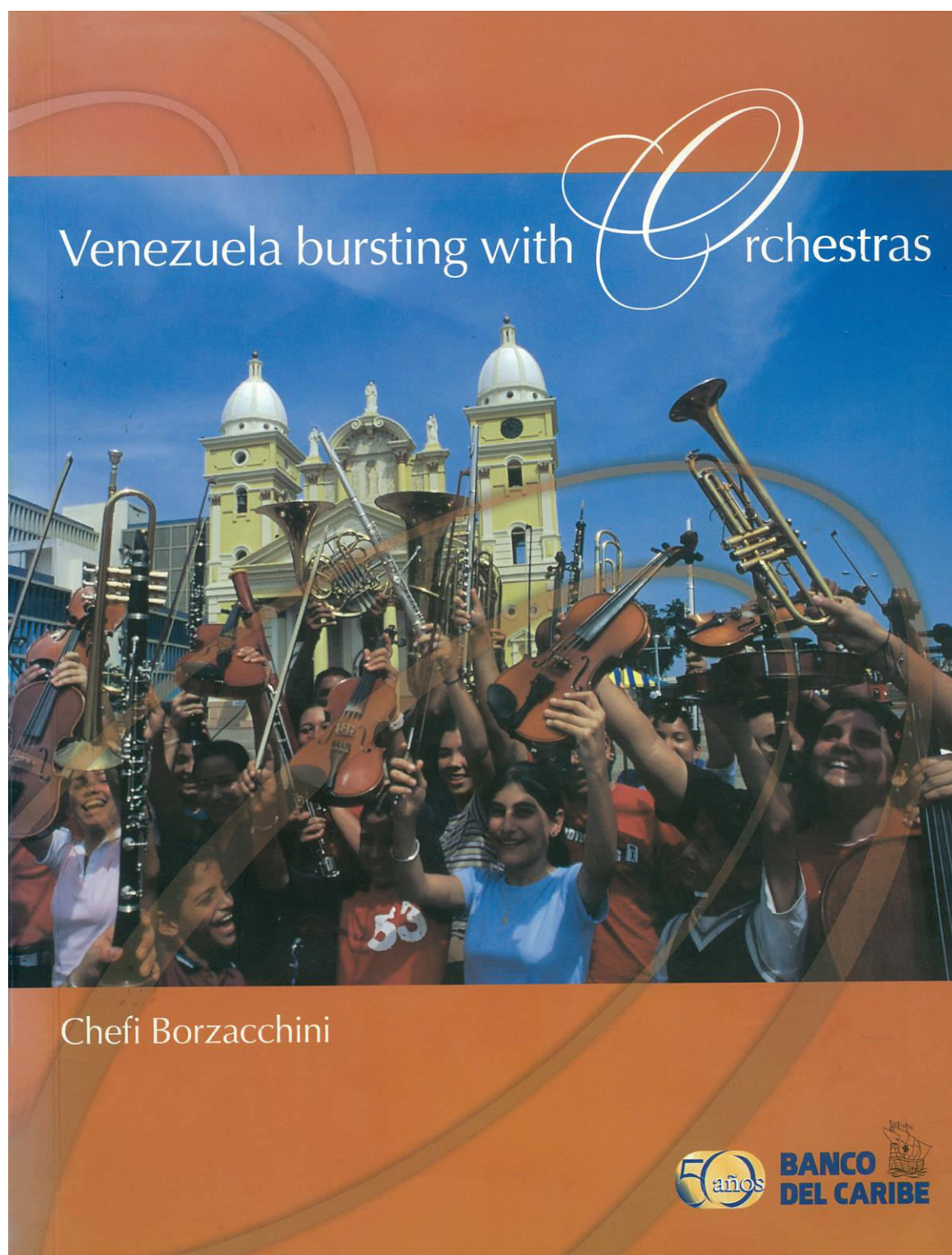
and nuances of different musical genres. The report also points out that conducting open-ended research about Sistema Scotland met with resistance from the organisation and this called for some compromise on the part of the research team.<sup>92</sup> In the words of the researchers ‘Sistema felt it important to be in control of the image/story presented’ and reading their report overall one gets the sense that political compromise rather than research autonomy won the day. Nevertheless, what this report confirms is that the survival and development of Sistema takes precedence over the political and ideological questions raised by disadvantaged people, public sector workers and scholars. Indeed to raise external support Sistema replicates stigmatising notions of poverty to imply that inclusion in an orchestra is the answer. This requirement led Sistema into the production of corporate propaganda not deemed to be suitable for local people. Such an approach to the representation and discussion of socio-political problems is the very opposite of the community ‘intelligence’ developed by Petare TV.

**Figures 6.8 & 6.9** Petare TV, Caracas, 2013, musicians and production crew, *Petare al Dia*, entertainment and current affairs program. Author's photographs.





**Figure 7.** *Venezuela Bursting with Orchestras*, promotional book on El Sistema published by Banco del Caribe in 2015. Cover: Banco del Caribe / photograph by Gustavo Marciano.



### **Conclusion: What harm can it do?**

Sistema and its backers vigorously promote a ready-made culture, they do not promote public accountability in education or culture. Yet Abreu and other proponents of the organisation are also explicit about their desire to mould good citizens. Proponents of the Scouting movement with similar social engineering ideas about building harmonious group identity, national unity and so forth may fairly claim to perform a valuable role despite their ideological orthodoxy. However this orthodoxy also prevents these organisations, now in decline in Britain and elsewhere, from calling on much support from the public purse because the public interest in supporting 'culture' at all depends first and foremost on the recognition that it is infinitely more nuanced and radical than the discursive spectrum of representative party politics. This is equally true in Venezuela and the UK. Therefore organisations which promote cultural orthodoxy in the name of social unity are still open to conscientious official questioning when they look for public money. Notwithstanding the barely accountable patronage system run by the Arts Councils in Britain (now abolished in Scotland under nationalist government) as arms length bodies the Arts Councils were intended to be the guardians of this cultural gap between representative politics and everyday life, between ideology and social being.<sup>93</sup> However the idea of sowing the oil, and latterly resource driven nationalism boosted Abreu's project immeasurably. The examination of public funding assessments shows that what checks and balances exist do not apply to the good-faith economy; therefore the idea of '21<sup>st</sup> century charity' goes unexamined.

To observers concerned about cultural democracy or cultural eco-systems the Sistema model may look like the equivalent of an oil slick. Given its flaws why did governments at the opposite sides of neoliberalism go out of their way to give it support? Here critical aesthetics may expand on socio-political analysis. In his book *O Som e o Sentido*, the Brazilian composer and writer José Miguel Wisnik describes the following characteristics of orchestral musical performance;

*The inviolability of the written score, the horror of making mistakes, the exclusive use of melodically tuned instruments, the silence demanded from the audience, all makes one hear traditional erudite music as representative of a sonorous drama of melodic-harmonic tones within a chamber of silence, wherein noise would ideally be excluded (the bourgeois concert theatre turned out to be this chamber of representation). Such representation depends on the possibility of enclosing a universe of sense within a visible frame, a box of verisimilitude that must be, in the case of music, separated from the paying audience, and ringed in silence.*<sup>94</sup>

Politics is also about the dramatic and highly ritualised control of sound and voices. More so because strategic political debates and decision-making increasingly takes place in international political arenas where politicians and members of unelected power elites congregate behind closed doors. While not always ‘ringed in silence’ ordinary people have little or no access.

Arguably the G8 and the offices of the European Union are Scotland’s delimiting political structures more than the UK government. From an avowedly anti-imperialist position, Venezuela has been at the forefront of the development of regional power structures such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) founded in Caracas in 2011. Part of the novelty of the Sistema model is that the poor were symbolically present when Gustavo Dudamel and the Simon Bolivar Youth Symphony Orchestra gave a concert for the 2011 CELAC summit. Not even the now notoriously misleading Make Poverty History campaign discussed in the last chapter could engineer this level of inclusive symbolism.<sup>95</sup> Orlando Chirino, the Trotskyist trade union leader and former Chávez supporter turned opponent, observes that these events exclude labour and social movements from meaningful participation. With the history of the European Union in mind it is easy to see that the apparently progressive socio-economic aims of regional economic blocks can ossify institutionally and be reversed. They give way to a blatant capitalist technocracy which in the case of the EU does not merely encourage an orchestrated democracy, periodically it was seen to demand it.<sup>96</sup> As Vice-Minister for the Promotion of the Cultural Economy, Humberto González was interviewed in this study before the death of Hugo Chávez. Symptomatic, perhaps, of the politics of excessive presidentialism, González saw Chávez’ leadership role as the main defence against CELAC going the same way as the EU. Perhaps reflecting more of his own Trotskyist background González also spoke critically about the competition for government money coming from oil rents and the difficulty of fostering independence and pluralism in such a mono-economy. In general terms González was candid about ‘mistakes’ made by the government.

The development of a homogenising force in education and culture like El Sistema ought to be seen in the historical context of Venezuela’s oil economy. If looked at as a subconscious model for political participation and representation then ‘the inviolability of the written score’ that Wisnik describes closing a wider ‘universe of sense within a visible frame’ fits very well

with ritualised political events of inter-elite horse trading mentioned above. Consciously or not, the attempt to create model citizens who do not question the terms of inclusion doesn't stop there though. Globally Sistema fits into the political phenomenon known as NGOism or NGOization, namely 'the professionalization and institutionalisation of social action.'<sup>97</sup> For all the talk of rights which emanates from Non Governmental Organisations they are not generally conducive to active trade unionism among their workforce and sometimes virulently opposed to it.<sup>98</sup> Because NGOs are advancing neoliberal government policies by creating bridges between State and private business interests, critics see their non-governmental tag as something of a misnomer which conceals various levels of dependency. The development of El Sistema and the State umbrella organisation FundaMusical Bolívar is an example of the bewildering variant known as a GONGO; a Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisation. Studies have shown that even when NGO type organisations do side with labour activists and social movements, their involvement may weaken rather than strengthen popular power because of their chronic external dependencies and professionalised outlook.<sup>99</sup>

As a conservative GONGO reproducing notions of the deserving poor, and evaluating children in terms of human capital, the Sistema model is not merely an alternative to peoples' organisations and authentic democratic action. I have argued that as a powerful manifestation of the good-faith economy Sistema ought to be seen as a serious threat to both. The technospirituality it fosters cheapens the language of solidarity and unity; it is already implicated in the atomisation of politics and the 'colonisation' of social space that typify NGOization. The most important weapon the poor have in the fight against inequality, and the socio-economic precarity which is spreading upwards as a result of capitalism, is anything but meritocratic notions of upward mobility, or the development of income generating human capital. If the history of socialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a guide the crucial weapon the poor have to hand is the political capital gained from self-organisation and class solidarity — the very things Abreu's model of cultural mobilisation counters aesthetically and socially.



## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Reaching for the Stars: A Forum on Music Education,' University of California, Berkeley, translation by Rodrigo Guerrero. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEYSfn2-P9k> (Last accessed July 2013)

<sup>2</sup> The Simón Bolívar Music Foundation, (*FundaMusical Bolívar*) is the state governing body of the National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras and Choirs of Venezuela, widely known as *El Sistema*. The State Foundation for the National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras of Venezuela (FESNOJIV) was founded in 1996 and renamed *FundaMusical Bolívar* in 2011. This 'umbrella organisation' is attached to the Ministry of People's Power for the President's Office of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In this chapter I also refer to the sister organisation Sistema Scotland and the international organisational model which has less formalised connections to the state, simply as Sistema. For the official description of the *El Sistema* see <http://www.fesnojiv.gob.ve/en/el-sistema.html> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *The Ensemble* (3/2017) — *A newsletter of the U.S. and Canadian El Sistema Movement*, online at [http://ericbooth.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/TheEnsemble\\_March2017.pdf](http://ericbooth.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/TheEnsemble_March2017.pdf) (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>4</sup> See Cleaver (2000), p.81 ff.

<sup>5</sup> See Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), p.346 ff.

<sup>6</sup> See for example *The Finland Phenomenon*, (El Sistema Educatiu Finés) documentary by John A. Compton, New School Films. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhVpAuz9ccA> (Last accessed December 2013).

<sup>7</sup> See also Haque (2002).

<sup>8</sup> In the first photo-essay on poverty in London, the socialist writer, Adolphe Smith, wrote; 'there is an element of romance about the swarthy Italian youth to which the English poor cannot aspire'. Considering the labour conditions of children working as street musicians, and their public appeal at the time, Smith concluded: 'The traffic in very young children should be checked; the older children will continue to come over here of their own accord. The well-founded hope of gain, and the love of travel and change will suffice to attract a constant supply of street musicians. These will be obtained readily without any resort to kidnapping, or the creation of white slave trade. The present evils, whether exaggerated or not, would soon disappear if the operations Elementary Education Act could be made to extend to foreign children, and if the *padroni* were brought under the Factory and Sanitary Acts which govern other employers of labour. In the meanwhile it is hoped that the English public will continue to welcome with their pence all who cheer with good music our dull streets.' See Thomson and Smith (1877), pp. 85-88.

<sup>9</sup> In March 2013 Lois Beath focused her award winning blog, *My Cruise Stories*, on the creativity of the 'Beggars of Spain'. Beath writes: 'Unemployment is quite high in Spain right now, so in some areas we saw quite a number of beggars. (...) In Palma de Mallorca (...) the beggars in the old part of town all had their own style. Some sold art or trinkets, but that's nothing new. Others though, they dressed up in costumes that got weirder and weirder as we worked our way through town. (...) Other beggars perform as street musicians in hopes people toss coins their way in appreciation of the entertainment.' See <http://mycruisestories.com/2013/03/09/beggars-of-spain/> (Last accessed March 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Influenced by the rise of workers' illustrated publications and by avant-garde aesthetics, realist photography took a radical anti-naturalist turn in the 1920s and 30s. The intention to reveal class relations in this period can be seen in Karel Hájek's 1934 photomontage using a picture of child musicians. In making music the children of the poor become a charming spectacle for the disturbingly maternal gaze of a brightly lit fashionable young woman. See also Birgus (2002).

<sup>11</sup> In Borzacchini (2005), pp.16-29.

<sup>12</sup> By 1992 Pietri regarded the state, not markets, as impediments to all-round development. See 'Not sowing the oil by Arturo Uslar Pietri', translated at The Devil's Excrement, <http://devilsexcrement.com/2005/09/08/not-sowing-the-oil-by-arturo-uslar-pietri> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>13</sup> 'Socialism for the 21<sup>st</sup> century' became one of the key slogans of the Bolivarian revolution headed by Hugo Chávez.

<sup>14</sup> UK Government statistics quoted by BBC. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/studentlife/debate/2008/42\\_state\\_vs\\_private\\_school.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/studentlife/debate/2008/42_state_vs_private_school.shtml) (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>15</sup> See Pearson (2010) (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See UNESCO, Consultations of the Director-General with Member States, *Social Inclusion, Social Transformations, Social Innovation* (23 November 2012), [http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/BPI/EPA/images/media\\_services/Director-General/ConceptNoteSocialInclusionSocialTransformationsSocialInnovationEN.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/BPI/EPA/images/media_services/Director-General/ConceptNoteSocialInclusionSocialTransformationsSocialInnovationEN.pdf) (Last accessed June 2017).

<sup>18</sup> See Bourdieu, (1992) also available online at <http://www.variant.org.uk/issue32.html> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>19</sup> In Scotland the right-wing policies of different Westminster governments on the one hand, and the prospects of a much greater share of North Sea oil revenue on the other, combined to make nationalism more attractive to socialists of various hues. In the long run-up to Scotland's 2014 independence referendum on the 18th of September, when almost 45% of voters supported independence, key moral arguments about the political economy were often swamped by more technical debates about the prospects for increased oil revenues for Scotland.

<sup>20</sup> Alberto Dao in Borzacchini (2010) *Venezuela en el cielo de los escenarios*. (Caracas: Fundación Bancaribe) p.213. See also Govias (2011) on the five principles.

<sup>21</sup> The survival of the Bolivarian revolution looks increasingly uncertain at the time of writing, what is certain is that Venezuela is very sharply divided in terms of political loyalties.

<sup>22</sup> See 'Where Pathos Rules: The Resource Curse in Visual Culture', by Owen Logan, in McNeish and Logan (2012) (eds.), pp. 98-130.

<sup>23</sup> See Bourdieu (1977), pp.171 ff.

<sup>24</sup> From an interview with Abreu by Alan Yentob, in 'How Music Saved Venezuela's Children' BBC *Imagine* series, programme produced by Alan Yentob and Janet Lee. Transmitted 18<sup>th</sup> November

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2008. Available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43tqQhOTCgQ> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>25</sup> Borchert (2012), p.11.

<sup>26</sup> Tunstall (2012) p.36. There is some variance in the numbers given for El Sistema. See 'El Sistema' entry on Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_Sistema](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Sistema)

<sup>27</sup> See 'La música popular merece tanto apoyo como el sistema de orquestas' interview with Cecelia Todd, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2011, *Ciudad CCS* (Caracas: Fundación para la Comunicación Popular CCs de la Alcaldía de Caracas) <http://www.ciudadccs.info/?p=240320> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>28</sup> From interview CBS *60 Minutes* programme, presented by Bob Simon, Broadcast 13<sup>th</sup> April 2008, <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4011959n> (last accessed July 2013) Another spokesman (Raphael) for El Sistema interviewed on the same programme responds to the question why popular music would not 'work' for poor children?: He answers that "what they have at home on the radio is popular music all the time, their father who drinks everyday gets drunk with *that* music. So you have to give them something different. And when they sit in one of these churches in the orchestra they think they're in another country, another planet and they start changing."

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in 'Venerated High Priest and Humble Servant of Music Education' by Daniel Wakin (1st March 2012) *New York Times*. Here Abreu states that 'Orchestras and choirs are incredibly effective instruments against violence.' See [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/04/arts/music/jose-antonio-abreu-leads-el-sistema-in-venezuela.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/04/arts/music/jose-antonio-abreu-leads-el-sistema-in-venezuela.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>30</sup> See for example *International Herald Tribune*, 'Finding George Orwell in Venezuela' by Francisco Toro, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012. <http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/16/finding-george-orwell-in-venezuela/> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Sen (1999), p.17 ff.

<sup>32</sup> From *El Sistema*, film by Paul Smaczny and Maria Stodtmeier, produced by EuroArts Music (2008-2011).

<sup>33</sup> See Crisp and Levine (1998), Gates (2010), Logan (2007).

<sup>34</sup> From *Jose Antonio Abreu: The El Sistema music revolution* filmed for the Ted Prize. [http://www.ted.com/talks/jose\\_abreu\\_on\\_kids\\_transformed\\_by\\_music.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html) (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>35</sup> See Borchert (2012) p.51. See also Govias (2011) whose account is endorsed by Abreu and which clearly states the meritocratic idea of El Sistema.

<sup>36</sup> See Baker (2014), pp.220-223. I extend my thanks to Baker, an ethnomusicologist at University of Oxford and the Royal Holloway School of Music, for sharing these insights from his ethnography in advance of publication.

<sup>37</sup> According to Gates's (2010) interviews among business leaders, some discounted Chávez's socialist message and lent support in the hope of gaining access to State contracts. Whether support for Abreu's project could in some way deflect crude demands to 'collect on (...) financing and secure a favour' from the government in return — as one of the business leaders described the logic in his sector — or to what extent financing from business people was actually reciprocated, is an open question. See Gates (2010) p.108. I make no suggestion here that increased support for El Sistema,

which was only solidified in 2007, was part of a corrupt *quid pro quo*. Rather, as Gates shows early business support for Chávez did not just reflect cynical positioning, but also internal political conflicts within the business sector which stemmed from the way the sector was ideologically discredited by Venezuela's 1994 banking crisis. What can be said is that against this background of intra-elite conflict Chavez's support for Abreu's project was a signal that the government and the business elites could still find common ground. This was increasingly significant because in other areas of the arts, government policy could be heavy handed as my interviews for this study suggested. In a rebuttal of the good-faith economy, private sponsorship at the State-owned Teresa Carreño theatre was forbidden when what was really needed to be demonstrated, from the government's socialist position, was that private patronage did not determine or influence the repertoire. Tellingly, the unpopularity of this official rejection of private patronage among performers and administrators was a motivational factor in the joint unionisation of different employees at the theatre. Thanks here to the following interviewees, Luis Borges (official of the Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores de la Fundación de Teresa Carreño SUTFTC), Jorge Moreno (Union organiser in Museum of Contemporary Art in Caracas), and Luis Sarmiento (singer and union member at Teresa Carreño).

<sup>38</sup> See Sadie (2001), p.474-479.

<sup>39</sup> Voltaire (1819), p.351.

<sup>40</sup> See Barber (1996), p.11.

<sup>41</sup> See Lasker-Wallfisch (2000).

<sup>42</sup> 'Nigel Kennedy criticises greedy conductors' by Nigel Reynolds 12th March 2008, *The Telegraph*. See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1581463/Nigel-Kennedy-criticises-greedy-conductors.html> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>43</sup> See Stein and Stein (1970), pp.152-155.

<sup>44</sup> Borzacchini (2005), p.44.

<sup>45</sup> See 'How did Venezuela change under Hugo Chávez?' posted by Ami Sedghi, *The Guardian*, Data Blog, 6th March 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2012/oct/04/venezuela-hugo-chavez-election-data#zoomed-picture> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>46</sup> See *Venezuela: La violencia salpica a las escuelas*, by Milagros Rodríguez, [http://infosurhoy.com/es/articles/saii/features/main/2013/03/29/feature-02?change\\_locale=true](http://infosurhoy.com/es/articles/saii/features/main/2013/03/29/feature-02?change_locale=true) (Last accessed December 2013).

<sup>47</sup> See Guerrero (2010), Pearson (2009) for considered assessments that are broadly pro-Chavez.

<sup>48</sup> See for example Eva Golinger and Roberto Briceno-Leon discussion <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestoryamericas/2012/06/20126554927373645.html> (Last Accessed December 2014).

<sup>49</sup> See *El Sistema*, film by Paul Smaczny and Maria Stodtmeier, produced by EuroArts Music (2008-2011).

<sup>50</sup> The same issue can be seen from a more ethnographic angle in the English writer Owen Jones' (2012) book *Chavs - The Demonisation of the Working Class*. Jones unpicks the stereotyping and blame-the-victim mentality that characterise British socio-economic relations today.

<sup>51</sup> Young's book was translated into seven languages.

<sup>52</sup> The life of the US gangster, Benjamin 'Bugsy' Siegel (1906-1947), who could count celebrities such as Cary Grant (1904-1986) among his closest friends, is an example of the complex culture and character of organised crime. A tellingly forgiving treatment of the subject is 'A Leap Back A Look Forward', Clark County TV (Las Vegas) which contains an interview with Siegel's daughter Millicent Rosen. Online at, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sG4shsMOK\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sG4shsMOK_Y) (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>53</sup> See Naylor, (1990) (2004).

<sup>54</sup> The lending members of the IDB are; Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States.

<sup>55</sup> See Hazel (2007).

<sup>56</sup> See Inter-American Development Bank (2007) p.5 and in the 'Project Objective' section of this report. No consideration is given in this financial assessment to the all too obvious risk that involving large numbers of children in the same cultural activity so defined might not be a deterrent to delinquency and indeed might, in some circumstances, even increase feelings of alienation, resentment among others.

<sup>57</sup> Geoff Baker enquires about the ongoing use of these funds. See <http://geoffbakermusic.wordpress.com/el-sistema-the-system/el-sistema-blog/constructing-el-sistema/development> (Last accessed July 2013). See also CAF news at, [http://www.caf.com/en/currently/news/2012/11/caf-approves-\\$310-million-in-loans-for-cultural-and-urban-development-in-venezuela](http://www.caf.com/en/currently/news/2012/11/caf-approves-$310-million-in-loans-for-cultural-and-urban-development-in-venezuela) (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>58</sup> See Sanguinetti and Villar (eds.) (2012).

<sup>59</sup> See Hobsbawm (2000), p.24.

<sup>60</sup> From author's interview in Caracas.

<sup>61</sup> See Balibar and Wallerstein (1991), pp.153-216.

<sup>62</sup> For an examination of the historical overlap of liberal and fascist thought and practice, see Landa (2012).

<sup>63</sup> On April 3rd 1968, the day before he was assassinated, the civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King made his last and most famous 'Mountaintop speech' before the sanitation workers on strike in Memphis Tennessee. King stressed that direct action always needs to be 'anchored with the power of economic withdrawal'. (See AFSCME union website at <http://www.afscme.org/union/history> Last accessed July 2013). The assassination of leaders like King and Malcolm X (1925-1965) eroded this kind economic thinking and hardened racial thinking just as Malcolm X, its most celebrated black proponent, had abandoned it. Although blackness was then to mask an emerging middle class politics based on commerce and individual self-advancement, it also articulated a certain understanding of exploitation rooted in the history of slavery. The interaction of the entertainment industry with this ambiguous public consciousness is evident in cultural-political events such as the Wattstax Music Festival — often called the 'Black Woodstock' — held in 1972 in Los Angeles to mark the riots that occurred in the Watts district seven years earlier. The young Reverend Jesse Jackson gave the stirring invocation at the festival to an audience of around 100,000 people in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. At the end of the invocation the people rose to recite the black national litany: '*I am*

*somebody! I may be poor but I am somebody! I may be on welfare but I am somebody! I may be unskilled but I am somebody! I am black, beautiful, wild and must be respected, I must be protected. When we stand together what time is it? Nation Time! When we stand together what time is it?...'* See 'Wattstax' documentary by Mel Stuart (1973) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwuAwSbxbNk> (Last Accessed March 2015). Jackson's invocation makes one understanding of politics evident; that of masses of people acting in concert. As I have discussed in chapter three power is much more complex than this Kantian numbers game. Historically, relatively small numbers of workers have counteracted the power of even smaller numbers of capitalists, a point which makes the very different context of King's 1968 speech all the more poignant.

<sup>64</sup> From author's interview.

<sup>65</sup> See also Lebowitz (2010) review article of Iain Bruce book.

<sup>66</sup> It is often said that Chávez' support for El Sistema was strategic and for that reason a degree of toleration is evident among people involved in producing Petare TV. Yet nobody interviewed in this study offered an analysis of Chávez' strategy or its possible outcomes for organisations like Petare TV. In October 2013, in keeping with the station's goals of fostering participation and debate to strengthen the revolution, I was given the opportunity to critically discuss El Sistema on air and recall Chavez' early admiration for Tony Blair and the "Third Way". I am grateful to Petare TV for this and subsequent discussions which informed this chapter.

<sup>67</sup> Mendez gives the example of identifying and closing down illegal bullet factories.

<sup>68</sup> See 'Radio Bemba in Age of Electronic Media' by Sujatha Fernandes, and 'Catia Sees You - Community Television, Clientelism and the State in the Chávez Era' by Naomi Schiller, in Smilde and Hellinger (2011).

<sup>69</sup> Geoff Baker points out that in priority was given to El Sistema's prestige construction projects in Caracas rather than staff pay. He reports that hourly-paid staff were earning less the minimum wage even before the value of Venezuelan currency crashed. See Baker's (02/12/2016) blog at, <https://geoffbakermusic.wordpress.com/el-sistema-older-posts/building-for-an-uncertain-future/> (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>70</sup> See 'A Country without A State, Governmentality, Knowledge and Labour' by Femi Folorunso, Philippa Hall and Owen Logan, in McNeish and Logan (eds.) (2012).

<sup>71</sup> See *La Mancha* website at <http://lamanchaweb.blogspot.fr/> (Last Accessed March 2015).

<sup>72</sup> From author's conversation with Sotillo Meneses in Caracas.

<sup>73</sup> According to Abreu the discipline of the classical orchestra is 'the most beautiful expression of national unity.' Quoted in Borzacchini (2010), p.60. In a similar vein he says 'art ought to be 'a flag bearer of citizenship', see 'Reaching for the Stars: A Forum on Music Education', op.cit. (note 1).

<sup>74</sup> For more music education at Eton, see Logan, (2015b).

<sup>75</sup> GEN (2011) and GCPH (2015).

<sup>76</sup> I draw here on Scott (1998). Scott charts the social and environmental costs of modern State efforts to create legible citizens.

<sup>77</sup> By comparison with the Sistema model, the Scouting movement may well be regarded as rather more benign in so far it has not sought to slant the school curriculum. Despite their colonial origins

much could also be said for the Scouting goals of teaching children about life out of doors as a valuable corrective to sedentary ways of life today. See also Logan (2015b).

<sup>78</sup> The GEN report sees no comparable programmes because of the intensity and amount of time taken up by the Sistema project. See Gen (2011), p. 22. It is remarkable for a report claiming to be 'social science in government' that no comparison is made between Sistema and traditional voluntary youth organisations. Therefore the evaluation goes along with Sistema's demotion of cultural-aesthetic issues, but fails to follow through by properly exploring the project's social mission.

<sup>79</sup> See Sistema Scotland film, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s19bvdhzAGM> (Last accessed December 2014).

<sup>80</sup> From official statistics cited in Borchert (2012), p.30.

<sup>81</sup> Since the discovery of North Sea oil and gas, the revenues accrued from oil have sugared the pill of an inter-linked industrial and agricultural decline regarded by different British governments as mere adaptations to globalisation. As a result the relatively balanced economic development in a county such as Germany may appear almost as utopian as undiluted socialism.

<sup>82</sup> GEN (2011), p.7.

<sup>83</sup> GEN (2011), p.6.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. In the executive summary section and elsewhere it is claimed the Sistema project is totally inclusive whereas its more uncertain 'reach' is considered briefly in section 3.15. See pp.11-12.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>86</sup> Public music services operate in highly regarded education authorities such as East Renfrewshire. Notable too is the National Foundation for Youth Music, (NFYM). This charity, founded in 1999, funds a broad range of projects in England, including El Sistema inspired projects; the NFYM describes itself as 'genre agnostic'. However, speaking on 24 April 2015, Nick Wilsden, of the NFYM stressed the foundation's broad commitments to youth-led projects and argued these represented a more progressive alternative to the hierarchical and genre biased model offered by El Sistema. Wilsden's paper, 'Established Alternatives to El Sistema: The National Foundation for Youth Music' was delivered at the conference *El Sistema and the Alternatives: Social Action Through Music in Critical Perspective*, convened by Geoff Baker, Gustavo Borchert, Owen Logan, at the Institute of Latin American Studies, Senate House, University of London.

<sup>87</sup> This evaluation was headed by Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH), with Education Scotland and Glasgow Caledonian University. For a more detailed analysis of the report than I am able to give here see Logan (2015b).

<sup>88</sup> This logic model approach confuses education, which is supposed to strengthen the mind, with mere training. As in rational actor theory it fails to address the complexity of expressive culture in which people do things that are not in their immediate self-interest. If they acted solely out of self-interest, culture would only be as interesting as beauty contests, a comparison that is in fact relevant given Sistema's Venezuelan origins. See Logan 2015 and 2015b.

<sup>89</sup> Immigrant populations deserve to be taken more seriously than is evident in these Scottish reports. In many instances socio-economic status may have little to do with a lack of social glue or poor motivation, and more to do with the unequal treatment that Britain's opportunity state perpetuates. One can easily imagine, for example, the uproar in Britain if Sistema were to promote Qawwali music

from India and Pakistan as an officially sanctioned path to upwardly mobility and the answer to a vast range of educational and social problems; or the uproar in France if Andalusian orchestras of North Africa were harnessed to compensate for structural inequality. See Logan 2015 and 2015b.

<sup>90</sup> See GCPH (2015) p.38.

<sup>91</sup> Gen (2011), p.50.

<sup>92</sup> My own impression is that Sistema Scotland's leadership feels threatened by open enquiry and are actively antagonistic to the idea that such academic work is necessary in pursuit of the public interest in social policy. The contents of a long awaited interview with the director were withdrawn from this study because Sistema objected to the scope of the interview questions.

<sup>93</sup> The replacement of the Scottish Arts Council with Creative Scotland, an organisation widely perceived to lack cultural independence, has been fraught with problems leading to the resignation of the directors.

<sup>94</sup> Translation by Gustavo Borchert. Quoted in Borchert (2012), p.50.

<sup>95</sup> Hodkinson (2005) also available online at <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/G8-Africa-nil/> (Last accessed July 2013).

<sup>96</sup> See for example the controversial Lisbon Treaty; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish\\_European\\_Constitution\\_referendum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_European_Constitution_referendum) (last accessed December 2013).

<sup>97</sup> See Choudry and Kapoor (eds.) (2013) and Opoku-Mensah et al (eds.) (2007).

<sup>98</sup> See Sharma, A. (2006).

<sup>99</sup> See 'A Country without A State, Governmentality, Knowledge and Labour' by Femi Folorunso, Philippa Hall and Owen Logan, in McNeish and Logan (eds.) (2012); see also Choudry and Kapoor (eds.) (2013) and Opoku-Mensah et al (eds.) (2007).



## Appendix V: Biographical Narrative

### **Janette Rodríguez and Oscar Sotillo: Arts and the Bolivarian Revolution**

The Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela is still more of a cultural revolution than an economic one for Janette and Oscar, two of the founding members of an artistic network called *La Mancha*, meaning the stain. The couple speak about this informal collective as one of many different “tribes” now articulating a cultural transformation in the country. *La Mancha* is a well known magazine but the organisation behind it provides a range of platforms for the work of poets, musicians, muralists and documentary artists. They run a bookshop and organise live performances and radio broadcasts. Typically for this kind of organisation public funding is on an *ad hoc* basis. It comes from government commissions and advertising and from publically funded projects, such as running workshops and producing murals, the monies from which support the total project.

Like most Venezuelans Janette and Oscar belong to *mestizo*, mixed race families. Janette was born in 1964 and raised among the imposing concrete edifices of Venezuela’s capital city, Caracas. Her father was a high school teacher and her mother a housewife in charge of four daughters. Oscar was born to the east in 1968 in the rural environment of Cumanacoa in Sucre state which reaches out to sea and almost touches Trinidad and Tobago. As young people yearning for different social experiences Janette remembers her early cultural sensibility in terms of flower power or “flower eaters” as the hippy ideal was described in Venezuela. Oscar was brought up by his divorced mother who moved with her sons to Caracas when they were still young. She was a nurse whose Protestant beliefs, humble demeanour and sense of virtue he feels influenced the left wing standpoint he and his brother developed as young men. For Oscar being left wing was almost synonymous with being creative and he went to learn printmaking at the age of seventeen at the Universidad Nacional Experimental Simón Rodríguez. Later on he went to the Instituto Armando Reverón. He encouraged Janette to enrol there in 1994.

The couple had been brought together the previous year by Janette’s sister Jakeline and her partner Gaston Fortis who remains Oscar’s closest friend to this day. Jakeline and Gaston were from the same cultural milieu and saw in Janette and Oscar another couple waiting to be made. Looking back after twenty years together they think they have influenced each other

for the good. Oscar feels less argumentative and more philosophical than he once was and Janette feels more politically astute.

Although from the other side of the world when I met Janette and Oscar in Caracas we all recognised certain mirror images which came into view as we talked about our different backgrounds. These reflections didn't come to mind because of our left-wing politics. At our first meeting together, for example, the couple told me they hated trade unions, this and other issues were the subject of much debate between the three of us. What we found in common was that we all belonged to a mixed class grouping that is bourgeois and bohemian at the same time. In popular sociology it is argued that bourgeois and bohemian cultures have completely merged. In the media "Bobos" are scoffed at for opportunistically fusing "1960s counter-culture and 1980s entrepreneurialism" and dominating the rest of society. Whether or not some of the richest people in the world are vegetarians, or go to yoga classes, seems of little importance compared to Janette and Oscar's experience. What was entertaining and profound about discussing the ambiguities of actually existing bohemia with them was the recognition of a two-way street of upward and downward social mobility. For most Venezuelans the bourgeoisie is a social category which signifies only the ruling class, not the "petite" or "petty" bourgeoisie. Among the couple's friends and comrades there are many people from middle class backgrounds who are downwardly mobile or stuck in unenviable positions with qualifications but few prospects. Often disillusioned and sceptical these people mix with others from poorer backgrounds who have risen up the social ladder but who don't want to join the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Indeed in talking about these upward and downward trajectories it seemed to us that if there is one place these two types are guaranteed to meet it is on the terrain of art and politics. On this ground people from different backgrounds linger together and some find the form of politics which they care for most.

In the case of Janette and Oscar their commitments to Venezuelan culture took priority over having children — a decision forced upon them partly by circumstance. In our discussion they admit that their unusual situation does have implications for how they see traditional forms of collective action like trade unions. Their liberation from some of the responsibilities of family life and its constraints began with the more despondent choice they made in 1996 to leave Venezuela. They felt the country was stagnating under the weight of US hegemony and local opportunism. Paradoxically they ended up in the society that was the source of the problem. They were given the chance to leave Venezuela and go to the United States by

Janette's sister Jouseline who was there at the time. Oscar says that four years living precariously in Philadelphia means that nobody can dazzle him anymore with "the American dream". He knows the reality. He did have success there including some well received exhibitions and a significant award and Janette found a niche working with a Puerto Rican community organisation. But when Hugo Chavez was elected president of Venezuela in 1999 they felt compelled to return home. Among other things they were going to pursue the embryonic idea of publishing an arts and cultural magazine which Oscar had first discussed with Gaston years before.

In time Oscar, Janette and the *La Mancha* collective earned the respect of people and institutions. Picking up copies of their publications or listening to one of their broadcasts nobody could be in any doubt that the organisation is part of the Bolivarian revolution. The degree of critical autonomy they enjoy within this political movement depends on confidence, charm and humour. For instance Oscar remembers comparing the complaints made about *La Mancha* by a Chavez government official to the overly sensitive behavior of a teenage girl. The man in question seems not to have taken Oscar's jibe too badly. According to the couple the independence of cultural activity supported by the government is the crucial counterweight to commercialised culture on one hand, and to artistic elitism on the other. They think Venezuelan artists quite shamelessly sought to stay close to power but they believe this is changing because the Bolivarian revolution is putting power into the hands of the people through community councils and an array of communitarian initiatives.

*La Mancha* has had its ups and downs. But the collective has outlived similar ventures and gone on to receive international recognition. Janette and Oscar particular remember their joy on being invited to speak at the Casa de las Américas in Havana. However the informality of the organisation brings all the problems of family life. Despite the usual arguments and petty disputes that have cropped up from time to time, the most rewarding aspect of *La Mancha* for Janette is its steady growth. Oscar stresses its informality, he says "we don't need to organise, we need to work." Doing what people want to do together produces an organic structure and ways of equitably relating to one another. In summing it all up they say that the collective is less worried about the production of artifacts of various kinds and more concerned with the development of the relationships that produce them. In this sense it is "the experience of doing" that matters when it comes to changing culture.

## Chapter 8 Conclusion: Debating the New Spirit

*...what the modern world has realized are the worst fears of the Scottish Enlightenment rather than its best hopes. What we confront in advanced countries is the conjunction of an excluded and dependent cultural proletariat with a set of overlapping élites who control the presentation of political choice, the manipulation of economic organization, the legal structures and the flow of information. Instead of that ever widening educated public of the democratic intellect (...) we have the mass semi-literacy of television audiences.*<sup>1</sup>

Alasdair MacIntyre (1991)  
Interview in *Cogito*

*“Sharing” at one level (files) enables ownership at others (hardware, network access). (...) The technological fetish “is political” for us, enabling us to go about the rest of our lives relieved of the guilt that we might not be doing our part and secure in the belief that we are after all, informed, engaged citizens.*<sup>2</sup>

Jodi Dean (2007)  
*Democracy and other Neoliberal Fantasies*

### Introduction

As case studies in the previous chapters show, participation in the arts influences policy discourse in other important areas such as education and crime. However, rather than enriching debate in these areas the arts have assisted in the de-radicalisation of policy, not least when the arts become a vehicle for the meritocratic ideology discussed in the last chapter. The social ‘impact’ of the arts cannot be measured, *ceteris paribus* because they articulate a mixture of State and market failures. These failures include the state of public discourse targeted in the above quotations. MacIntyre’s critique in 1991 alights on television audiences, stresses dependency, and implies passivity, whereas Dean, a left-wing political scientist in the US, focuses on interaction and participation in the age of the internet.<sup>3</sup> Her analysis of a democratic failure in civil society centres on what she calls communicative capitalism. She argues that computer hardware is a vital part of capitalist development, and private control of the industrial production is the important matter. The content of all the information, entertainment, and art circulated by the informed and engaged citizens she mentions may be regarded as a secondary matter, and as a gift to this industry.

Unintentionally the two quotations above go to the heart of a debate prompted by Boltanski and Chiapello’s (2007) *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (*New Spirit* hereafter). In this

concluding chapter, the debate provides an ideal context in which to present the findings of this thesis concerning the arts as instruments of social action. According to the *New Spirit*, the discourses established by Romanticism which distinguished artists from managers no longer do so. Transgressive, or taboo-busting, art and entertainment, linked to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde critique of everyday life, influenced 1968 student movements; and people active in those movements went on to hold influential positions in society. Thus, Boltanski and Chiapello argue that an ‘artistic critique of capitalism’ became an elite discourse, at least in France where their study is based.<sup>4</sup> Drawing on psychological theories which informed the artistic critique, management was refashioned in the 1970s and 1980s with the help of consultancies. ‘New management’ stressed skills development and supposedly gave workers more personal autonomy, although technological developments and globalisation meant fewer ‘traditional’ jobs and less security. In this precarious context contemporary management increasingly sees the acquisition of flexible skills to be part of fair remuneration for work since it is claimed such skills increase employability.<sup>5</sup> Exposed to the same structural insecurities, artists came under more pressure to take on a variety of commercial, institutional, and voluntary activities to establish and broaden interest in their projects.<sup>6</sup> The late 20th century also saw the rising profile of the social-entrepreneur who self-consciously blends artistic sensibilities and managerial aims.<sup>7</sup>

Boltanski and Chiapello are concerned with the ‘deconstruction of social classes’ by entrepreneurial discourse and although they do not examine the role of academics in great depth, they contend that sociology is implicated in the process.<sup>8</sup> Sociology, they argue, gradually changed its approach to class politics in line with political policies that sought to subdue and substitute the traditional demands of organised labour. From the 1980s France’s ruling Socialist Party became less concerned ‘with the distribution of effort and profit between social groups’, and was instead focused on those deemed to be ‘most in need’.<sup>9</sup> By ceasing to offer a fully political representation of classes, sociology contributed to the erosion of class politics. Given this contested critique I pay due attention to academic labour in this concluding chapter. Boltanski and Chiapello’s study is an important one, but I argue that the forms of soft power described in the *New Spirit* are not really new, and they should be understood, at least in part, as the historical influences and effects, of the good-faith economy which also incorporates academic efforts. What could be said to be ‘new’ are the increased amounts of money potentially available for all kinds of donations and the theoretical, rather than political, language used to justify some of them. Evidence, that is unintentionally

suggestive of these points, comes from a 2014 television interview with the Nobel Prize winning US economist, Paul Krugman who confirmed the findings of the French economist Thomas Piketty regarding the accumulation of inherited wealth. Krugman had this to say:

*...he's telling us that we're on the road not just to a highly unequal society but to a society of oligarchy, of inherited wealth — patrimonial capitalism. (...) Even for someone like me it's a revelation. Even the title, the first word in this book, 'Capital'; we stopped talking about capital, even people like me have stopped talking about capital because we thought it was all about human capital; and we thought it was all about earnings; and we thought the wealthy were people who (...) found a way to make a lot of money.*<sup>10</sup>

As pointed out in chapter one, the discourses which circulate between private and public research foundations, charities, governments, and intergovernmental bodies such as the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), stress theoretical forms of capital.<sup>11</sup> Likewise much of the financial support given to the arts articulates the faith in the accumulation of human capital (skills and qualifications) and social capital (social connections). The focus on theoretical forms of capital has failed to bolster egalitarian politics. Even in the wake of Piketty's widely discussed analysis of the massive accumulation of actual capital within the top one percent of the wealth scale, and occupations and demonstrations in the name of the other 99%, the politics of reducing taxation on corporations and very wealthy individuals went from strength to strength leading up to the 2016 election of Donald Trump as US President.

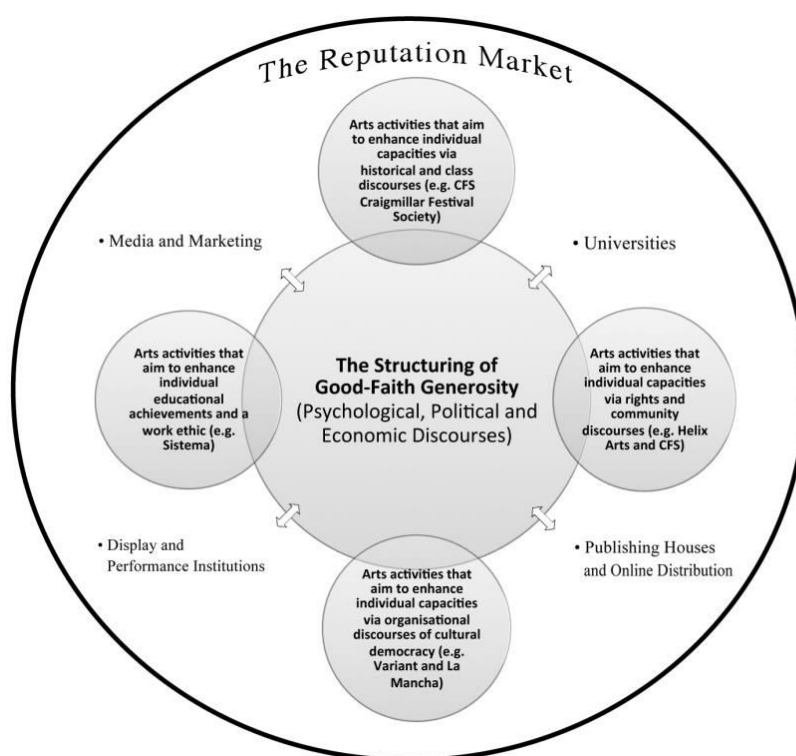
In the countries focused on in this study, the UK and Venezuela, the distribution of petroleum resource revenue may, to some extent, have overshadowed the politics of taxation. Although public support for progressive taxation may be much stronger than parliamentary politics suggests, this has not been a government priority in the UK.<sup>12</sup> In Venezuela it took a slump in oil prices to reinvigorate taxation policy.<sup>13</sup> However commenting on the climate of opinion against progressive taxation in the US, Krugman blames an 'apparatus' including the media, and think-tanks, which 'hammer against any suggestion of redistribution'.<sup>14</sup> Krugman's explanation, like MacIntyre's, implies that the public are passive and can be led by the nose. Notwithstanding the undeniably powerful influences on public opinion, and capitalist bias in the presentation of political choices, this chapter argues that the arts have an equally important role in so far as they shape highly questionable ideas of progressive social agency. Previous chapters and biographical appendices explore stated motivations and claims for socially-

engaged arts projects. This chapter examines their largely unstated *structuring* within, and of, the good-faith economy. In the theoretical terms discussed in chapter four, this represents the mid-ground between structure and agency, between the routine actions or institutional functions which lend structures stability on the one hand, and the sphere of self-conscious reflexive actions which determine agency on the other. If the arts cannot be disaggregated from State and market failures, then the ways people compound these failures via the good-faith economy needs to be examined more closely. Bourdieu (1977) argues that the mechanisms of domination connected to the good-faith economy ‘escape the grasp of individual consciousness and power’ because, ultimately, the system of economic production is also ‘a system of producing the producers’.<sup>15</sup> This suggests that gift-economics must be shown in the round. I do this by examining psychological, political, and socio-economic discourses in the arts. Despite their best intentions these discourses stack up in favour of patrimonial capitalism and against effective trade unionism. Bourdieu sees cultural domination resulting in ‘savings’ for economic masters because direct purchases of lasting loyalty would be much more costly in terms of money, services and time.<sup>16</sup> In my hypothesis (chapter three), such a saving is represented by this virtuous circle: Lower taxation = increased profit margins = increased capacity for giving = increased influence over matters of public policy (including issues of taxation and credit). If the influence delivered by gift-economics amounts to a ‘saving’ then what matters is how it is made, and at what political cost.

Like the modestly paid professions adopted by middle classes in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries — whose real source of wealth were shares and property<sup>17</sup> — the status of artistic labour is not directly linked to pay; reputation and status are at least as important. As Michael Young (1994) points out in his study of meritocratic ideology, the tradition by which aristocrats exerted themselves ‘only at work which was sanctified by being unpaid’ has been admired and emulated.<sup>18</sup> The artistic projects looked at in this study depend on a mixture of State and private patronage which enables low paid and precarious creative labour, alongside voluntary participation. As we have seen, this situation, largely taken for granted, is justified in terms of creating human and social capital which theoretically contributes to upward mobility. This thesis has critiqued these approaches empirically and theoretically. If the accumulation of theoretical forms of capital is to be taken seriously, then the absence of political capital in this theoretical frame points to a loss of power.

In this chapter I pay special attention to the practices which draw upon the tradition of avant-garde political critique highlighted by the *New Spirit*. However, in what follows I take into account all the artistic projects in this study, and how they reiterate the ‘generosity’ of the good-faith economy; albeit according to various theories of the individual’s needs. [See Fig. 1] Evidently some of these human needs shown in the following diagram overlap while some are in conflict. Notwithstanding the differences I argue that there are increasing structural pressures on people to participate in gift-economics whereby a plethora of voluntary activities produces the theoretical forms of capital which are recognised, and possibly honoured, by investments from employers, funding agencies, and patrons. Underlying funding decisions, and beyond the issues which differentiate arts organisations, there is a fluid reputation market to take into account. As the figure below indicates, artistic projects engage in a reputation market via universities, publishing houses, online distributors, institutions of display and performance, media and marketing.

**Figure 8.1** The Structuring of Good-Faith Generosity



The first part of the chapter examines the structuring of the good-faith economy via psychological, political and economic discourses in the arts. Reputation in this context involves a combination of generosity and restraint which is best understood by critical comparison: the political capital of trade unions is traditionally derived from the — now



much eroded — capacity to ‘bite the hand that feeds you’, but artistic projects rarely turn on their private funders and patrons. Rather as the historical background of Helix Arts (discussed in chapters three and four) suggests, project funding from private foundations such as Barings, involves a kind of match-making, or courtship, which is sometimes determined by the desire for ethical coherency. In the second part of the chapter I argue that this is a form of agency which reiterates gift-economics. Ultimately, this means that socially-engaged arts projects are exhausted by their own ‘generosity’.

### Psychological Structuring

Speaking at a managerial ‘retreat’ organised by Saga Foods Inc. in 1969 the US psychologist and management theorist, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), remarked that ‘with the Marxian approach to the workplace there are inevitably adversarial conflict, struggle and class haggles (...) we are post-Marxian because we are working together with good-will and good-faith. (...) This attitude shows itself in the fact that you have not behaved like a group of enemies or real rivals, in the sense of trying to “stab” or cut each other down.’<sup>19</sup> Maslow’s management theory appears somewhat dented by the realities of cut-throat global competition. Of more lasting influence is Maslow’s conception of the ‘self-actualising’ individual who, having satisfied their basic needs, becomes occupied by ‘peak experiences’, or the reverie that comes from total absorption in tasks and experiences.<sup>20</sup> For at least part of his life Maslow was on good terms with the Frankfurt School Marxist, Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979). One of the ideas they shared was that capitalist affluence — which supposedly met basic needs — meant that the radical role which classical Marxism ascribed to the proletariat was outdated.<sup>21</sup> This argument was to be an important influence on the student movements of 1968. In *One-Dimensional Man*, first published in 1964, Marcuse argues that business and organised labour were in collusion, and communist parties were pursuing a reformist path of integration with capitalist industrialisation and consumerism.<sup>22</sup> Whereas Marcuse looked to ‘outsiders’ and minorities to overthrow capitalism, Maslow advanced ideas of socially meaningful creativity, which included the arts but went beyond them.<sup>23</sup> Maslow’s ideas were an alternative to the lack-luster profit motive which, by the 1960s, was failing to inspire managers themselves.<sup>24</sup> Rather than attempting to meet basic needs on a permanent basis (as in the case of the Craigmillar Festival Society which closed down in 2002, discussed in chapter six), the vast majority of socially-engaged arts organisations only stress the psychological benefits of an intervention or ongoing group endeavor, benefits such a freedom of thought or improved self-motivation.<sup>25</sup>

These psychological well-being claims are firmly stated by conservative organisations such as El Sistema (chapter seven) but a comparable sensibility is articulated by people on the left of the avant-garde tradition, such as Janette Rodríguez and Oscar Sotillo, who speak of the organisation of La Mancha as a ‘tribe’. [Appendix V] According to the *New Spirit* what is at issue here is a curious mixture of corporate management and avant-garde anti-capitalism; it is the suggestion of an elite, and politically decisive, alliance between the two agendas that makes Boltanski and Chiapello’s thesis controversial.<sup>26</sup> An example of the mixture of agendas has already been discussed in the previous chapter: in 1985, Comedia, the left-wing arts and urban development consultancy drew on ‘post-Marxian’ management theory in a reflexive critique of the countercultural collectives of the time.<sup>27</sup> Drawing on feminist analysis Comedia’s pamphlet, *What a Way to Run a Railroad*, denounces the ‘structurelessness’ in left-wing cultural organisations which, it is argued, masks ‘cultural snobbery’ and produces a wider political culture doomed to failure (Landry et al 1985).<sup>28</sup> The authors also critique a ‘hamstrung’, ‘male-orientated’, collectivism which they think dominates trade unionism and resists the development of workers’ co-operatives.<sup>29</sup> In terms of publishing ventures they take the commercial success of the Communist Party’s magazine *Marxism Today* as an example of a business-like and broadly engaged approach worthy of emulation, not least in terms of the voluntary ‘self-exploitation’ of skilled labour.

With the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991, *Marxism Today* also closed down.<sup>30</sup> La Mancha and Variant in the UK, the main avant-garde inspired organisations in this study, are examples of the kind of affinity groups critiqued in Comedia’s pamphlet. In such prefigurative groups the equality, or improved social relations, anticipated in society are reflected in ethical commitments to organisational experimentation. Comedia suggest this leads to excessive introspection, ideals of self-organisation become more important than political efficacy.<sup>31</sup> However contra Comedia’s confidence in a more market-savvy approach, advertising is at best an unreliable source of revenue for such organisations, depending as it does on market buoyancy and/or a degree of clientelism in cultural networks.<sup>32</sup> With austerity policies in the UK, and a sharp fall in oil prices affecting public finance in Britain and Venezuela, these two organisations have good reasons to see themselves in a very precarious situation. In 2015 La Mancha was evicted from its bookshop at the Biblioteca Nacional in Caracas after a dispute about its use. Although stocked and used by La Mancha for recitals and workshop activities, they did not have the labour or resources to develop a retail business or keep the space open during business hours. La Mancha’s public statement protesting the closure of its base stresses

voluntary labour and identifies with a ‘Do-It-Yourself’ political identity, more truly revolutionary than ‘bureaucratic’ currents within government and State institutions.<sup>33</sup>

Since its founding Variant’s main public funders were Creative Scotland (formerly the Scottish Arts Council). Unable to establish sufficient additional revenue required by Creative Scotland, Variant was forced to suspend publication of its magazine in 2012 after Creative Scotland refused to renew annual support. Variant protested the lack of transparency in Creative Scotland’s communication and decision making processes. An ambiguous concession was won in 2014 when the funders offered the group a grant to prepare a report on Variant’s cultural role. Entitled *Divergence and agonism: Cultural communication in Scotland* (Helms, French and Bradley 2016), the report adopts a ‘conciliated approach’ and defends Variant’s publishing project on ‘cross currents in culture’ in terms of intellectual pluralism and the values of cultural democracy.<sup>34</sup> Among the key critical themes are the difficulties experienced by artist-run organisations under a creative industries model of cultural governance. The report mentions the ‘erosion’ of State welfare and says that: ‘Particular forms of practice and being together that developed in one set of economic and political conditions may acquire a very different significance in another context. What was at one time a form of ‘free’ self-activity may later become a means of exploitation’.<sup>35</sup> How this comes about — particularly the implied weakness of professional associations and unions — is not explained, nor does the report consider what can be done to improve the situation.<sup>36</sup>

Since the time of MacIntyre’s remarks about a ‘dependent cultural proletariat’, others have looked at this area of labour closely, and neologisms such as ‘cognitariate’, or ‘dependent precariate’ have emerged to describe a class fraction that is produced by cultural industrialisation.<sup>37</sup> Writing in the 2011 volume, *Critiques of Creativity: Precarity, Subjectivity and Resistance in the ‘Creative Industries’* Stefan Nowotny criticises the *New Spirit* for a too simple account of bohemian and avant-garde artistic subjectivities and their role in capitalist rejuvenation. Nowotny defends the historical significance of avant-garde social protest (e.g. Guy Debord and the Situationist International mentioned in chapter three of this thesis). He insists on the importance of the long-standing internal critique of artistic ‘creativity’, since it is materialist, and quite opposed to the artistic ‘theology’ that is said to lift artistic experience above a general economic analysis of capital and labour.<sup>38</sup> By discussing such issues Variant and La Mancha exemplify this critical standpoint, but Nowotny does not really address an important aspect of the *New Spirit* thesis; namely that the pressures, and distrust, which

advanced capitalism engender mean that the system creates a demand for supposedly authentic social relations which take the form of voluntary servitude.<sup>39</sup> If Boltanski and Chiapello's analysis is accurate then, as public purse strings are tightened, the good-faith economy will have additional importance as the means of propping up this psychological dynamic.

In the same volume Maurizio Lazzarato questions the elitist credentials and accuracy of the notion of 'the artistic critique of capitalism' used in the *New Spirit*. He points to significant income inequalities within the groups that Boltanski and Chiapello say embody the artistic critique. He also argues that neoliberalism had no need of the supposedly free-thinking free-associating artist as a psychological role model.<sup>40</sup> The model of 'an entrepreneur of her/himself' was already provided by human capital theory and various icons of entrepreneurial energy which are proffered to everyone, artists included.<sup>41</sup> However in questioning the origins of a neoliberal model of entrepreneurial creativity, Lazzarato's critique of the *New Spirit* overlooks important issues of political and socio-economic courtship. These social issues of good-faith between classes, which shape political consciousness, and demands for reform, are more evident via the critical evaluation of good-faith economy. Nevertheless, what can be seen from this perspective are both the successes and the failures of the sort of discursive conciliation which Boltanski and Chiapello regard as the hegemonic spirit of the age.

A striking example of failure in the neoliberal courtship of the arts is the *Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires* (CIP) campaign in France. Both Nowotny and Lazzarato stress CIP activism to show that artists are not necessarily passive workers consumed by entrepreneurial ideology or artistic theology.<sup>42</sup> CIP protests precarious employment conditions and they have addressed France's National Assembly with proposals to reform an increasingly Kafkaesque welfare system which, they argue, violates workers' rights.<sup>43</sup> By contrast with politicised voluntarism CIP argues for a guaranteed basic income for all. The CIP network also attempts to build strike capacity and solidarity between workers, immigrants and the unemployed, nationally and internationally, and oppose 'social dumping'.<sup>44</sup> As Lazzarato points out what is at issue for CIP are not the peculiarities of artistic experience but that 'intermittent employment is becoming the norm in the wage-earning system'.<sup>45</sup> Many of CIP's leading activists are roughly the same generation as Lazzarato (born 1955), which is to say that artistic 'theology' may be more easily subordinated to the memory of radical currents in the

workers' movement. However, it should be noted that although CIP's political aims are difficult to differentiate from a general critique of capitalist austerity, their strike strategy shows a debatable preference for activism outside established trade unions; yet one way or another, the fate of large unions will affect the success of CIP's strategies.<sup>46</sup> While the CIP standpoint seems clearer than La Mancha or Variant's in terms of addressing basic needs overlooked by good-faith economics, CIP networks also appear to be searching for autonomy from the ideological and practical disputes within trade unions.

Suely Rolnik, Marion von Osten, and Angela McRobbie, who write in the same volume, give somewhat bleaker accounts of artistic labour which give more credence to the *New Spirit* than Lazzarato does. In Brazil, Rolnik recalls the argument made by the artist Lygia Clark in the late 1960s that the only way artists can escape the co-option of their work is by unleashing a much greater, limitless, sense of creativity.<sup>47</sup> According to Rolnik this 'flexible subjectivity' is the real power of art, but where it leads is entirely uncertain. One possibility, she argues, is a politics of liberation, another is the politics of 'pimping'; nothing less than surrender to capital. Looking at the arts scene in Switzerland von Osten discusses a freelance world of creativity-on-call where reputation and self-differentiation is everything and collective politics count for very little.<sup>48</sup> Angela McRobbie discusses the gendering of creative work in London. She suggests that creativity becomes idealised by some women, and may be perceived as more rewarding than personal relationships.<sup>49</sup> As I discuss later on, the sense of creativity McRobbie alludes to needs to be situated in the historical development of gendered civic roles.

Clearly new management discourse has influenced left-wingers who have considerable influence in the arts, such as Comedia's authors cited above. However the contradictory perspectives on the artistic critique I have identified here do not suggest that these psychological discourses are exhausted in terms of radical potential. Psychologically nuanced attempts to produce highly motivated 'turned-on' workforces are subject to economic forces; as Boltanski and Chiapello point out precarious employment is a source of great stress and trade unions have been accused of neglecting mental health.<sup>50</sup> What the above discussion does suggest is that dependency and exploitation in the arts is structured by supplanting a practical engagement with 'basic needs' (e.g. housing and welfare services once provided by the Craigmillar Festival Society), with discourses of psychological autonomy (e.g. 'free' self-activity in Variant or La Mancha). Various types of 'gift', including gifts of labour, keep this

disembodied discourse going. The deployment of these gifts from above and below dignifies unemployment and precarious free-lance labour. Detailed critical discussions of employment in the arts brought are the fore by CIP, and in Britain by coalitions such as the Precarious Workers Brigade, but their influence, if any, on trade union strategy is difficult to assess.<sup>51</sup> Given CIP's emphasis on strike capacity, it should be pointed out that relatively strong unions have sometimes engaged with informal creative labour which aims to psychologically integrate life, work and friendship and remain 'free'.<sup>52</sup> The poor shape of many unions today, and conditions of voluntary servitude, make this linkage an even more important consideration. Lazzarato's position actually coincides with the *New Spirit's* basic concern with the 'deconstruction' of social class. Recently he has argued that Walter Benjamin's diagnosis of fascism in the 1930s is particularly relevant today, because, as capitalist property rights are reinforced, there are, again, injunctions on the masses to be expressive and creative in all other matters.<sup>53</sup>

### **Political Structuring**

As I discussed in chapter three the roots of a poetic compensation for the loss of social democratic rights are to be found in the enlightened despotism of the 18th century. The emergence of aesthetics at that time coincides with a Kantian form of soft power which, on the one hand, protects contracts from political contest, and on the other, identifies public communication as the proper sphere of politics. In keeping with this rationale artistic social engagement tends to be seen first and foremost as a service for communities, the public, or even for the multitude; not as contracted work for funders, employers, and patrons. In the age of the internet these generous 18<sup>th</sup> century boundaries are even more relevant to the political structuring of the arts.

In her book *Democracy and other Neoliberal Fantasies — Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics*, the US political scientist, Jodi Dean, (2007) critiques the contemporary terms of political participation which, she argues, reflect an obsession with communicating ideas rather than practical organisation, an imbalance which comes at a particular cost to the left. Dean's critique presents two key arguments. First, representative democracy, in any meaningful sense of the word, is defunct. She gives the example of the absenteeism of US Senators in October 2002, on the second day of the Senate debate on the invasion of Iraq. Politicians assured the public that a possible US invasion required this debate, but as Dean argues in practice, the discussions they deemed to be important were those taking place via

the internet and those created by the mass media.<sup>54</sup> For Dean the empty US Senate signals the technological domination of society by an industrial complex devoted to communication; yet the meanings, messages and even the fate of copyrighted products are much less important than their continual movement and circulation. The sheer flow of all sorts of data is the raw material, without which there would be much less demand for technological hardware. A check on returns on equity bear out Dean's argument: compared to a 4.7% profit margin in car and truck manufacturing, profits from the production of computer hardware reach almost 14%.<sup>55</sup> So just as capitalism has an interest in getting people to travel independently in cars, the system has an even more significant material interest in at least the appearance of uninhibited independent communication.

The second argument central to Dean's thesis is that the political left has bought into communicative capitalism, the roots of which also lie in a technocratic vision of improved political access and participation.<sup>56</sup> People on the left console themselves with the circulation of their messages and critical analyses while parties of the left suffer massive setbacks. To summarise, Dean's overall argument is that rather than facilitating democracy, communicative capitalism siphons off ideas, and intellectual energy, that might otherwise be tested out in actual political practice. It provides a fantasy democracy when the real thing has been superseded. Communicative capitalism, she argues, is responsible for 'the stunting of the left's political ideals and the diminishment of progressive political struggle'.<sup>57</sup> Dean does not write about the arts, but she concentrates on unraveling a paradoxical 'fantasy of participation' which is relevant to artistic and intellectual labour. In her words it is that: 'People tend to believe in both (...) abundance and registration. They believe that there is too much [information] out there and that their own specific contribution matters'.<sup>58</sup> She also points out that the techno-culture of communicative capitalism gives the impression of a global reach, but its networks are in fact restricted, not least by language and technological access. Although Dean's argument is compelling, it is not entirely clear why the left buys into communicative capitalism, an issue that can be considered here in relation to discourses of community, as opposed to labour.

If culture is understood as communication and process (as I argued it should be in chapter one), Dean's argument suggests that although there is increased autonomy in communication, political processes are being technologically structured and vice versa. An example is the way management uses information technology to consult and control individual workers;

inhibiting face-to-face communication and collective discussion in the workforce.<sup>59</sup> However compensation may come in the form of organisations which stress the need to empower the individual via a class based sense of community. This explains the particular attraction of Petare TV discussed in the previous chapter. Petare TV is one of Venezuela's numerous community television stations which form the Alba TV network. These community media organisations are a means of articulating class politics, and staging face-to-face interactions in and beyond the local area. A major objective of the Chávez government in Venezuela since the right-wing coup, attempted in 2002, was to counter the corporate media by supporting communicative organisations such as Petare TV and La Mancha that would be more favourable to the revolutionary process.

However such community television stations and avant-garde organisations appear fragile when, as Dean points out, the political left has retreated from the attempts to reform the State. Venezuela's revolution in the context of an endemically corrupt State apparatus is an interesting example of the problem. Here an experiment in revolution was based on an alliance between sections of the political elite (including the armed forces) and 'the people', via the popularity 'El Comandante', Hugo Chávez. This populist alliance was greatly strengthened, if not realised, using oil revenues to finance the 'social missions' and development projects undertaken by new community councils on a 'learn-as-you-go basis' often mixing contracted work with voluntary labour from communities.<sup>60</sup> Such experiments are, quite understandably, fraught with practical problems that may be overstated by critics from the right; Venezuela's reconstruction of egalitarianism could never be easy or uncompromised. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Venezuela's community councils are not politically neutral, and a politics so heavily based on the collective consumption of social goods is an uncertain means of overcoming corruption. Indeed some critics see these initiatives by-passing the problem of political clientelism altogether, and even spreading it; others are critical of the focus on neighborhoods rather than workplaces and labour relations.<sup>61</sup> At the time of writing the loss of Chávez, — widely regarded as the supreme communicator of the revolution — who died in 2013, together with the fall in oil prices, are factors helping push the eighteen year long experiment of twenty-first-century-socialism to the brink of internal collapse, and possibly towards externally assisted regime change.<sup>62</sup>

In terms of political structuring there is another strand of Dean's analysis which deserves consideration. Drawing on psychoanalytical theory she argues that political inaction is



repressed and concealed by the sheer volume of communication, and that the actual condition of political passivity gives way to a psychotic state where the public imagination is plagued by conspiracy theories. Dean devotes part of her book to investigating the controversy surrounding the destruction of the World Trade Centre. Here she sees valid doubts about the official story as well as dubious arguments on different sides of the '9/11 truth' debate. Dean does not seek to establish if the attacks were a false-flag operation; her case is that what occurred reflected broader, more deep-seated desires, for the political rupture of 9/11 and the political sequence it set in motion.<sup>63</sup> Dean's critique hinges on the interpretation of unconscious feelings. However it is worth considering the conscious rationales of extreme violence. Beyond the uncertainty about the 9/11 attacks, the internet exposes a deeper moral uncertainty about equality as a political value.<sup>64</sup> An aspect of the *New Spirit* thesis is the displacement of class by humanitarian discourses; and indeed the frequent focus in the arts and media on crimes against humanity does obscure the issue.<sup>65</sup> Even the worst crimes may be relativised on the basis of death counts; they are juxtaposed with acts of war in the name of democracy such as the area bombing of Germany and Japan or the massive increase in civilian casualties in the wars waged in the name of democracy over the past century.<sup>66</sup> In this context one may lose a sense of the differences between equality and democracy on the one hand, and class systems sustained by oligarchy on the other.

Indeed anyone adhering to egalitarianism as a received doctrine passed on by artists and intellectuals is likely to be bewildered by the sophisticated proponents of oligarchy as a necessary complement of popular sovereignty. An infamous example of this school of thought is the German, neo-Hobbesian, legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt (1888-1985).<sup>67</sup> Schmitt's position as one of the Nazi regime's most significant intellectual collaborators, an influential anti-Semite, and a proponent of peremptory justice, did not weaken interest in his ideas after 1945. His theory of sovereignty derived from exceptional acts which are before, or beyond, the law continues to be widely discussed by academics.<sup>68</sup> Schmitt's career is a salutary reminder that fascism, and far-right politics in general, are not the result of a lack of reflexivity, human sensitivity, or even a poor grasp of aesthetics.<sup>69</sup> As an unapologetic ex-Nazi, Schmitt lacked none of these. Rather his writings are an example of intellectual brilliance supplying justifications for jingoistic nationalism and personal opportunism.<sup>70</sup> A You Gov poll carried out among UK voters in 2006 showed very significant support for BNP (British National Party) policies, especially when they were not known to belong to the party itself.<sup>71</sup> The ambiguity of far-right rationality needs to be

understood and this is what tends to be overlooked by artistic projects which focus on human rights abuses instigated by far-right policies. It is true that what distinguishes the far-right is the attempt to tarnish people deemed to be impoverished because of cultural or religious backwardness.<sup>72</sup> However, the socio-economic implications of equality are countered on the far right by distributism; an economic theory that stresses the even distribution of private property throughout society. Achieving this can involve co-operatives and other forms of organisation which appeal to left-wing beliefs in self-management.

Despite the populist credentials of far-right parties, the military remain a pivotal political force in far-right civil strategy. The traditional pivotal force for the left — or more specifically what Boltanski and Chiapello call the ‘social critique of capitalism’ — is trade unionism, from which socialist parties were formed.<sup>73</sup> Undoubtedly, declines in union membership (especially evident in the private sector) wound left-wing politics, not least because trade union activism reveals much about the gaps between ideology, theory and actual conduct. Solidarity in the face of employers is the left’s traditional answer to the powerful myths surrounding military virtues and fortitude; as capitalism threw workers into harsh competition solidarity increasingly articulated a strategic mixture of cultural tolerance, economic risk-taking and political courage. In this sense it is a peacetime test of collective virtue. For Orlando Chirino the trade union leader, and disillusioned ‘Chavista’ mentioned in the previous chapter, the main problem underlying the Bolivarian revolution is the scarcity of civic virtue in Venezuela.<sup>74</sup>

Ostensibly the good-faith economy nurtures civic virtue, but close study here shows essentially the same problem that Dean sees in communicative capitalism; namely the detachment of virtuous political speech from collective tests. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the ideas of the far-right appear to flourish in a climate of ‘frantic’ electronic participation, whereas the left suffers from deficits of face-to-face collectivism.<sup>75</sup> If, as discussed earlier, psychological structuring disembodies the arts by lifting discourse away from basic needs, political structuring compounds this problem by lifting the arts from ordinary struggles which put basic political virtues to the test. It is not at all clear how, or where, the left’s political capital can be re-founded, if not through a radical and strategic renewal of trade unionism. However one of the factors thought to negate such an effort, is the technological re-structuring of virtually all economic production, via the ‘sharing’ of information that Dean critiques.<sup>76</sup>

### Socio-economic Structuring

From the 1930s onwards regular announcements have been made concerning the arrival of a post-industrial society, in which automated production supplants the working class. In this section I look at how the writings and presentations of Jeremy Rifkin — perhaps the most influential contemporary proponent of this idea — overlap with an artistic critique of capitalism put by the Marxian academic and artist, Gregory Sholette. Operating at different levels, both these US based writers offer influential analyses of gift-giving in the political economy.

Jeremy Rifkin is a socio-economic theorist and advisor to European and Chinese governments. His books, *The End of Work* (1995), *The Empathic Civilization* (2010), and *The Zero Marginal Cost Society* (2014), envisage the arrival of a world of networked ‘prosumers’ who produce, exchange and share energy, goods and services in a cooperative economy, facilitated by what he calls the internet of things. In Rifkin’s (2014) analysis this economy is already being created by two factors: business competition has brought about the steep reduction of marginal costs, which means that many goods and services are being sold almost for free and this process is accelerated by 3D printing technology. Design files allow machines to make objects and other machines, including building components, motorised vehicles and other sophisticated products. Not only are large workforces no longer required, Rifkin (2014) argues these developments amount to a largely conflict-free ‘revolution’, which spells the end of capitalist hegemony, and the flowering of social entrepreneurship through the electronic structuring of a ‘collaborative commons’.<sup>77</sup> In Rifkin’s futurology, real capitalists have become niche players in ‘the age of the free’.<sup>78</sup>

Rifkin (2010) argues that over the course of human development, empathy has been extended from kin ties, to religious ties, to national loyalties and now, thanks to the internet, people have begun to empathise with humanity. A race is on to avert global environmental catastrophe and this accelerates the development of empathy, he argues.<sup>79</sup> Rifkin may of course be accused of optimistically passing over the internal fracturing of all beliefs and identities in history. Nevertheless he argues that the pivotal area which must be developed if societies are to avoid a dystopian future is the ‘third sector’, operating between governments and markets; this area replenishes social capital by providing employment and voluntary activity as jobs in competitive markets disappear.<sup>80</sup> Rifkin’s prospectus is compatible with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) with expectations of a relatively painless

adaptation to the impact of climate change for the rich countries (chapter one). In keeping with the good-faith economy, what needs to be reformed according to Rifkin is not really the capitalist terms of competition, since he says this is already happening; the struggle is to reform human consciousness.<sup>81</sup> Here Rifkin's prospectus meets with one of the main concerns of Western aesthetic philosophy: the perfectibility of the human mind. So before examining Rifkin's arguments further, it is worth comparing his analysis with Sholette's account of artistic labour and gift-giving.

Gregory Sholette is an Assistant Professor who teaches a Masters course on art and social action at the City University of New York (CUNY), a course which is linked to the city's Queens Museum that supports activist art practices.<sup>82</sup> *Dark Matter, Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* is Sholette's (2011) contribution to a Marxism and Culture book series.<sup>83</sup> Here he argues that increasing numbers of over-qualified people in the arts are denied the 'Neo-Bohemian good life'.<sup>84</sup> They help make up the socio-economic 'dark matter' of his title; it is a reserve army of labour which survives precariously by adapting skills, and eking out a living from low-paid often non-unionised work.<sup>85</sup> What the arts demonstrate for enterprise culture today is how to manage, and indeed to extract value, from such a surplus workforce.<sup>86</sup> When artists work for free they distribute economic risks and make investments in potentially more lucrative projects.<sup>87</sup> Although Sholette's account of this enterprising servitude echoes the *New Spirit* thesis, he also argues artists are playing a leading role in the research and development of occupations and 'mutinies', especially in higher education.<sup>88</sup> So along with the gifts of labour, there are also 'gifts of resistance' — a term that could apply to the efforts of La Mancha or Variant.<sup>89</sup> From mock institutions and fake websites created by Situationist pranksters like the Yes Men, to artists' diverse collaborations, projects demanding Sholette's attention bubble up from a precariously employed, or unemployed, mass of surplus creative labour.

What commands his attention most is how artists organise themselves as artists.<sup>90</sup> Partly based on surveys, Sholette gives positive accounts of art-assisted community campaigns and the glimmering lights of anti-capitalism breaking through the dark matter.<sup>91</sup> Yet despite the obscurity, to which his book title alludes, Sholette fails to really examine economic practices which he says represent 'an alternative system of distribution and generosity.'<sup>92</sup> Although Sholette notes that many 'artists' live by other means he does not discuss their relations to trade unionism in other areas.<sup>93</sup> Nor does he discuss unions in general, and the labour

movement's orientation to the problems of precarious employment facing artists. Therefore connections between gift-giving and social status remain invisible.<sup>94</sup>

In his acknowledgments Sholette credits his trade union and CUNY for releasing time for him to work on *Dark Matter*. This declaration of involvement and support is unusually relevant to what is missing from Sholette's analysis. Among the topics which should have been included is New York State's 1967 Taylor Law that imposes a draconian 'no strike pledge' which even covers voluntary duties performed by teachers such as Sholette, and other public sector workers.<sup>95</sup> The enforcement of good-faith bargaining dates back to the governorship of New York State by a 20th century enlightened despot, and one of the most famous patrons of the arts, Nelson Rockefeller (1908-1979).<sup>96</sup> In recent times this political handcuffing has been particularly injurious for staff and students at CUNY.<sup>97</sup> With this history in mind one of course gets the sense of an elephant in the room when reading Sholette's analysis of artistic social engagement. Yet this odd scholarly disregard for union conditions is clearly unremarkable for Sholette's Marxist editors and left-wing publishers, and this may signal the dissonance within anti-capitalism which Boltanski and Chiapello argue, *is the New Spirit*. Yet closer to the heart the matter is that Sholette gives an extraordinarily partial account of gift-economics, when this is precisely what validates the social engagement of New York's Queens Museum, and the repression of trade unionism in the same city.

Although Sholette is very well placed to write on these matters, trade union politics are dissolved by his account of 'an alternative system of cultural distribution and generosity.'<sup>98</sup> Elsewhere he has argued that certain high level artistic projects he has been involved with in New York performed NGO-like functions better than actual NGOs.<sup>99</sup> There is some evidence for his point, but in keeping with the questionable framing of NGO campaigns their target was the repression of immigrant workers' rights in Abu Dhabi, where a branch of New York's Guggenheim Museum is due to be built. This disjointed focus on the deprivation of workers' rights in an exotic location corresponds with one of the most dubious, imperially minded, ideas to have been floated in trade union circles: namely the outsourcing of strike capacity.<sup>100</sup> In this scenario the poor would take the risks in confronting employers while unions in so-called advanced countries continue following partnership policies. All this is missing from Sholette's discussions of 'gifts of resistance'. Yet his analysis also reflects the intelligence and effort of the artistic critique of capitalism which, following Marcuse's focus on minorities

and outsiders, appears to be exhausted by its generosity to the cause of *the other*; and people deemed to be ‘most in need’. Whether or not this veils the political problems of facing up to public employers in New York, the Abu Dhabi campaign was supported by funders such as the Mellon Foundation, and in terms of gift-economics this activism must deliver a welcome sort of retribution for plutocracy and the power of money.<sup>101</sup> The enforcement of good-faith bargaining in New York State could not prevail otherwise.

Here, other voices, also from the US, may help correct a short-sighted view of gift-economics. Eric Raymond is a gun-toting libertarian hacker who helped develop a social movement for free open-source software, a community of prosumers which inspires Rifkin’s ideas about an age of the free.<sup>102</sup> However Raymond does not return the compliment; he accuses Rifkin of ‘cod-Marxism’ and fudging the distinction between zero and near zero marginal costs.<sup>103</sup> There are one-off, or non-marginal, costs involved in the creation of originals which Rifkin belittles; food and other important commodities will never reach near zero marginal costs. Raymond goes on to argue that Rifkin badly misunderstands market practices which mean, that when the servicing of products is what generates profit, it makes sense to give away the products.<sup>104</sup> If one is to understand how the good-faith economy bridges the capitalist market and what Rifkin and Sholette pose as rejections of it, Raymond’s most relevant point is best put in his own words:

*attempts to drive an ideological wedge between our commons and “the market” are wrong on every level. Our commons is in fact a reputation market — one that doesn’t happen to be monetized, but which has all the classical behaviors, equilibria, and discovery problems of the markets economists usually study. It exists not in opposition to monetized trade, free markets, and private property, but in productive harmony with all three.*<sup>105</sup>

The specific economic activity Raymond refers to here is the freedom to fix, develop, share and/or sell software. Once simply called hobbyists, the ‘hackers’ who protected this commons from monopolies have a classical free-enterprise sense of the marketplace. Raymond compares it to the life of the bazaar as opposed to the cathedral like corporations such as Microsoft and Apple.<sup>106</sup> Raymond’s argument also implies the commons is not always comparable to a natural pastureland; it may be an area actually cultivated *for* the market.<sup>107</sup> In another critique of Rifkin’s futurology the US anarchist writer, Bob Black, points out that ‘work’ has a double meaning; on the one hand it is that which needs to be done for survival, and on the other it is the key means of capitalist social control.<sup>108</sup> Black

argues that as the function of work declines as a mode of survival, the function of social control must increase, and potentially Rifkin's prospectus for the third sector is the means:

*If there's still so much work to be done, be it ever so feel-good and "community-based", and if people are to be paid to do it — whatever the "creative accounting" by which their wages are paid — then this is no nearly-workless world at all. Rifkin is assigning the otherwise unemployable to the workhouse or the chain-gang.*<sup>109</sup>

Critiques of Rifkin coming from right and left are strong indications of what is wrong with the notion that self-organisation, declarations of autonomy and non-profit activities are an escape from, or a rejection of, the capitalist terms of production.<sup>110</sup> The structures of capitalism are never so simply cut-adrift; and Sholette's brand of Marxism actually serves to obscure gift-economics.<sup>111</sup> In disengaging from domestic trade union and welfare issues — and thus appearing 'free' — activist voices in the arts function like well appointed propagandists for the good-faith economy. While the sense of disengagement within 'socially-engaged' practices is an identifiable pattern in the arts, it is equally important to recognise a form of agency which contributes to the creation of the psychological, political, and socio-economic structures discussed above. As novel as some of these may appear, the harnessing of individual agency and reflexivity into such discursive routines is hardly new.

### **The moral division of labour**

In recent decades, as manufacturing industries were relocated, and former industrial economies became focused on commerce in knowledge and services, an increasingly pronounced global, or geographical, division of labour occupied the minds of politicians and social scientists. By focusing on an ontological split on the political left which they trace back to the ideological ambiguities of 1968 rebellions, Boltanski and Chiapello's *New Spirit* partly captures an equally important moral division of labour.<sup>112</sup> However patrimonial capitalism provides ample reasons to consider this fracturing in terms of the *longue durée*; specifically as the impact of the 18<sup>th</sup> century political courtship between European aristocracy and the intelligentsia discussed in chapter three. Today this courtship is diffused (e.g. on the terrain NGOism) but one of its most potent expressions is the overlap of technocratic and artistic agendas.

The strength of what I have called techno-spirituality (chapter six) is registered clearly enough in institutionally consecrated art practices. The orchestral conductor Sir Simon Rattle stresses the importance of music education for problem solving and team building skills needed by

employers.<sup>113</sup> Notwithstanding such explicitness about the potential efficiencies that might be bolstered by the arts, the overlap of technocratic and artistic aims is all the stronger when it takes the form of a silence; one that is upheld by conservative, liberal and left-wing members of intelligentsia concerning the sort of employment issues I have highlighted above. The modern basis for a courtship between artistic and technocratic agendas is not hard to see. Technocrats are concerned with efficiency improvements *within* the terms of the political order and, as with Rifkin, they arm themselves with supposedly impartial theories about society; but they lack most of the genres of a living language. Artforms, and the genres within them, provide artists with numerous highly developed ‘languages’, but aesthetics has never been able to provide an impartial account of their merits.<sup>114</sup> So for socially-engaged artistic practices, which lack the required institutional recognition as ‘art’, technocratic discourses offer an alternative discursive framework that attracts funders.<sup>115</sup> I have shown some of the key steps above: (1) rather than contesting the terms of unemployment significant artistic organisations become complicit with psychological theories of self-managed ‘voluntary’ exploitation; (2) such efforts also feed a technocratic vision of participation manifested in relatively unhindered electronic communication which dwarfs traditional arenas of democratic debate and decision making; (3) finally, ordinary labour politics disappear in what are deemed to be alternative systems of free distribution and generosity.

Here it should be recalled from chapter three that the hypothesis of this study is that good-faith transactions in the arts are expressions of political courtship that results in a form of governance which avoids the financial and political costs of egalitarian education. Chapter six and seven showed how opposing class interests on this key matter of policy can be reconciled via the arts. The motives driving this substitution are considerably more complex than the old fears that mass education would breed criminals and disaffected ‘enemies of society.’<sup>116</sup> While financial donations in the good-faith economy are certainly an exercise of judgement, and a token of the good character of the donor and the beneficiaries, this gift-economy is merely instigated by money. Ultimately it takes the form of discourses and practices which are more attractive in terms of reputation and status than the practices of solidarity in the face of employers. Thus trade unionism is deprived of the human energy and the political capital which, otherwise, would curtail the capacity of the ruling classes to influence the political economy and set the terms of competition from the earliest years of life. Therefore the working classes are given access to forms of education and personal development which may be valuable to the individual, but do not assist their political



empowerment as a class; nor do they interfere with the social reproduction of the ruling classes. In developing rights in line with aristocratic reforms, the enlightened despots of the 18<sup>th</sup> century courted the European intelligentsia. In today's reputation market the artistic intelligentsia very rarely courts public attention in terms of quotidian trade union rights, or the general issues of education and employment; in most cases the old patrimonial spirit prevails. This means that matters of egalitarian principle are fractured; they are subordinated to interpretations of creative play and its socio-political effects.

### **Findings: Exhausted by generosity**

As instruments of modern well-being the arts still bear the hallmarks of 18<sup>th</sup> century enlightened despotism. As discussed in chapter three, although they are no guarantee of tolerance or civil peace, aesthetics have gained a Leviathan-like role in Statecraft. In what follows, this history provides the critical context for conclusions of this thesis. The good-faith transactions of the European Enlightenment fostered a spiritual aristocracy devoted to human perfection via the arts. The alliances between the spiritual aristocracy and the real aristocracy were never stronger than in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain when the country was a beacon of liberty conceived under aristocratic patronage. To its credit the political order in Britain protected a great many eccentrics and unconventional thinkers who broke with artistic conventions and developed aesthetic philosophies. Free-market doctrines allowed talented artists and writers such as William Morris (1834-1896) to achieve a sort of nobility, regardless of his socialist beliefs. However the practice of trade unionism did not enjoy the same protection since, in the eyes of its opponents, it meant submitting individual free-will and responsibility to group power and, by extension, to an interventionist State.<sup>117</sup> Therefore the idea of liberty entailed a generosity towards the individual and the local, alongside a suspicion of the wider interdependencies and conflicts which were making the working class during the industrial revolution.<sup>118</sup> For its opponents, and even for some sympathisers, the flaws of the working class movement stemmed from the doctrine of equality which — it is supposed — negates individual merits and excuses idleness.

This evangelical purism regarding work is deeply marked by histories of gender and race. Both aspects are mirrored in the life of Hannah More (1745-1833), the profoundly conservative English writer who campaigned against slavery, and for philanthropy. If the slave can get away with it, slavery only encourages idleness. More's other efforts were focused on teaching the poor to read but not to write. Of course with hindsight this one-

sidedness seems absurd; but today's discourses of artistic social-engagement are no less one-sided when segregated from the politics of labour organisation. As I have shown in this thesis, the latter problem runs very deep in the arts and the true extent of the issues are rarely exposed. If creativity is idealised by some women — as suggested by McRobbie cited above — it fits with this purism concerning work in general. More's doctrine that 'patience and subordination' would be rewarded amplified the fearful reformist prudence of her friend and ally Edmund Burke.<sup>119</sup> Despite this debilitating pedagogy More's tireless advocacy helped carve out a wider civic role for voluntarism and charity which she thought more appropriate for women than political confrontations and the pursuit of equality. By contrast trade unionism articulated workers' earliest demands for leisure time and unconstrained education.

Another key element of the institution building of the 18th and 19th centuries was the support of the arts and humanities as well as the liberal arts. By contrast with trade union demands for more leisure time, the virtues these subject areas are supposed to instil depend on a seamless blend of work, life and leisure. On this basis the qualifications and skills (human capital) which conservatives claim to be the fruits of bourgeois sociability may be advanced.<sup>120</sup> However, as a result, generous and highly unrealistic measurements of labour time are upheld by artists and intellectuals who gift time to employers and institutions — often at some cost to 'private' life — as they struggle to meet the demands of contracts. Classical Marxists point to the paradoxical intensification of labour brought about by technology, and stress the proletarianisation of white-collar employment.<sup>121</sup> Recent trade union research confirms that automation intensifies the 'psycho-social violence' associated with workers' suicides.<sup>122</sup> Yet among people whose work depends on the expression of the workings of their own minds there is a temptation to believe they already own and control the means of production.<sup>123</sup> Frequently underlying such a questionable impression is the sense of the public intellectual working for a greater good, a role mirrored by the figure of the artistic-social entrepreneur who, in keeping with Hannah More's example, works tirelessly towards political institutionalisation.<sup>124</sup>

As suggested in chapter four, the hidden-hand of the market, which supposedly turns private vices into public benefits, is not a mysterious economic force, but an institutionalised function; it is argued that the university is the preeminent institution in this respect.<sup>125</sup> The production of public virtue in higher education may encourage the separation of epistemologies from the contractual conditions of intellectual labour. This is hardly unique;

supposedly wholesome goods and services are not easily sold if conflicts over the basic terms of their supply come into view, 'fair trade' brands being the corollary in terms of marketing. The important point is that the arts and humanities promote a work-life *imbalance*, and this hidden-hand is being extended to other areas of employment. In the eyes of some employers, the possibility of employees pursuing 'passion projects' is a justification for low-paid flexi-time contracts.<sup>126</sup> Less cynically, employers of skilled white-collar workers are willing to risk fractions of paid time for their employees to develop subjectively meaningful activities that might, indirectly, bear rewards for the employer.<sup>127</sup> However the overall context for these very different gifts to the cause of social and human capital accumulation is that time allowed for trade union activity is increasingly criticised, particularly in the public sector.

These approaches to time management dovetail with Rifkin's vision of a society where — rather than facing the choice of unemployment, low pay, or a work-life imbalance — prosumers enjoy the benefits of automated production in a sharing economy.<sup>128</sup> The futurological vision he presents resembles a society entirely peopled by a spiritual aristocracy. This sense of a classless society is how the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye (1912-1991) reads *News from Nowhere*, William Morris's utopian socialist novel first published in 1890.<sup>129</sup> Like Rifkin's futurology, rather than a society that respects people who do irksome work, Morris's story envisages all these tasks done by machinery. Nor does dependence on machinery create unpleasant work. Explaining this society, one of Morris's characters says 'we have now found out what we want, so we make no more than we want.'<sup>130</sup>

Rifkin presents a technocratic but no less utopian agenda for efficiency. Among the problems he bypasses is the competition between unionised labour, and the cooperative labour which he promotes. Collectively organised self-exploitation does not always co-exist benignly with the contracted exploitation which unions seek to regulate, and in recent times competition between the two has even turned into lethal violence over nationalisation policy.<sup>131</sup> When Rifkin takes car sharing as an example of the sharing economy of the future, the interest of car manufacturers is only to catch up with the opportunities afforded by popular cooperation not to extract value from workers and customers.<sup>132</sup> Such expressions of good-faith also detract from the fact that long lean, highly automated, production chains, may be more vulnerable to workers in possession of strategic knowledge. The impact of well-targeted strikes may be all the greater. None of this diminishes the significance of the efficiencies and

improvements Rifkin describes. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries peasants were cleared from the lands; now the working classes are being cleared from the factories. However as socialists argue, in trying to outmaneuver the working class, capitalists cannot help but recreate it.<sup>133</sup> If technological improvements do not deliver a workerless world, and actually increase exploitation and competition among workers, discourses which effectively disorganise or *unmake* the working class, will help create the conditions for far-right identity politics to thrive.

Two key research questions have driven this study. One of them was how do the arts and politics speak to each other? I have argued they do so through discourses of virtue (chapter three). Philosophically distinct ideas of virtue (MacIntyre 1991), and associated types of reflexivity (Archer 2003), exist in both spheres. These *modi vivendi*, which articulate notions of self-worth, represent living connections between the arts and politics (described in the biographical appendices) which I take to be more practically significant than the philosophical autonomy claimed for aesthetics and the arts (e.g. Rancière 2010).<sup>134</sup> Historically complex ideas of human self-worth, forged by writers such as Burke and Schiller in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are at the centre of modern discourses of art and power; and today they translate into governmental theories of human and social capital. Given the failures of States and markets to distribute wealth equitably, the relative inclusiveness of the spiritual aristocracy becomes all the more significant.<sup>135</sup> It demonstrates that theoretical forms of capital may be connected to not only improved status, but to creativity and celebrity. In chapter six I showed how the ethos of the spiritual aristocracy was challenged in Britain when trade union power was at a highpoint in the 1970s; and even leading communists questioned workers' pay claims. Trade union audaciousness exposed the superficiality of the meritocratic tradition and also the weakness of Britain's social democratic reforms. But instead of a stronger focus on education, the stage was set for the techno-spiritual counter offensive aimed at employees' psychological redemption from implied vices of greed, and possibly indolence. Systems and management theorists' interests in the arts as avenues of more virtuous behavior was increasingly repaid by people in the arts, and this courtship has strengthened long-standing attempts to unmake the working class. Nor was this possibility entirely overlooked by the Comedia authors in 1985 even as they insisted that new managerial theories deserved a degree of 'respect' and 'acquiescence' from the left.<sup>136</sup>

The historical conjuncture leading to techno-spiritual governmentality lends credence to the *New Spirit* thesis which, in turn, makes the second question at the centre of this of this study all the more relevant: what are the differences between artistic instrumentalism coming from above or below in the political order? El Sistema and the Craigmillar Festival Society (CFS) are key examples which, respectively, throw light on the two trajectories. Ostensibly both organisations developed partly because of a public demand for access to musical education and this similarity makes their differences all the more striking. The discussion in the CFS about the arts, politics and poverty, alongside the variety of cultural and welfare activities the organisation pursued, (chapter six) contrasts sharply with the highly managed and specialised discourse of El Sistema (chapter seven). Devoted to the creation of youth orchestras as a means of countering deviancy, and an evangelical belief in meritocratic upward-mobility among the poor, it is no surprise that Sistema makes no effort to educate people about poverty. The integral differences between the CFS and Sistema can be summarised as *variety of purpose* versus *singularity of purpose*. These can be taken as defining characteristics of the instrumental trajectories examined in this study.

While the first expression of artistic instrumentalism bolsters social consciousness and may stress the need to change institutions as well as the prevailing socio-economic system, the second tries to adjust people to it. The story of Helix Arts (chapters four and five) is suggestive of the quandaries arising from attempts to occupy a middle ground. Radical and strategic political analysis tends to become the preserve of management rather than being at the core of artistic projects. Such an approach is consistent with capitalist models of employment associated with de-skilling.

The *New Spirit* stresses employment discourses which intend to incentivise work by balancing worker's autonomy with the levels of cooperation necessary to achieve management's goals. These goals include the possession of a psychologically 'turned-on workforce' which accepts such a feeling as a form of remuneration.<sup>137</sup> The main avant-garde inspired organisations in this study articulate a variety of political purposes and resist important aspects of this expression of soft power. However they also defend their modes of organisation in psychological terms. Whereas organisations such as Sistema, the CFS, or Helix Arts replicated existing organisational structures, Variant and La Mancha exemplify the prefigurative tendency that can be seen in community media organisations such as Petare TV. The downside of this ostensibly convivial, forward-looking approach to the individual and

society, is that employment tends to be piecemeal; and internal disputes result in people voluntarily dropping out of organisations rather than fighting their ground.

It is clear from this study that artistic discourses of social engagement are prone to neglect structural complexity. This weakness can also be seen in prefigurative affinity groups. In the case of La Mancha it was marked by a self-conscious disengagement from trade unionism, and a degree of optimism in the face of crime and corruption; yet it was this problematic political nexus which turned members of the military officer class into attractive partners for the left in Venezuela. In the case of Variant, any shortcomings in my own persuasive abilities would also need to be taken into account since Variant's report cited above is the outcome of discussions I was involved in at an earlier stage. My own position was that Variant ought to provide a critically reflexive account of checks and balances in the governance of contemporary culture since Variant's weaknesses are connected to systemic failings. I believe the lack of reflexive critique in Variant's final report reflects the very strong incentives to engage in organisational self-promotion, which was essentially what Variant was given money to do by Creative Scotland.<sup>138</sup> On the left these promotional discourses in the arts tend to be disguised by critiques of public institutions or markets when what matters is the techno-spiritual mid-ground supported by the good-faith economy. Thus the dynamics of exploitation and the differences between artistic instrumentalism coming from above, or from below in the political order, may become even harder to identify.

There is no structural reason why the techno-spiritual governance should not seek to engage with, and encourage, all expressions of artistic civic virtue except one — the solidarity of organised labour. Looking across different polities France's CIP network stands out as a rare attempt on the part of artistic labour to build strike capacity and international solidarity. Yet in this case too there is a stated preference for what can be politically self-made and managed. However federations such as the UNI Global Union — which represent more than twenty-million workers internationally — will influence the development of the geo-political landscape in ways which may be resistant, or conducive, to such projects.<sup>139</sup> Clearly this federation is a very important structure; but above all what the good-faith economy propagates via the arts are notions of social-engagement and self-worth, untainted by the problems, and disputes, within such organisations.<sup>140</sup>

In what must be regarded as a remarkably prescient futurology of meritocracy in Britain, first published in 1958, Michael Young suggests that the possibility of talented people wasting their lives in trade union organisation would be intolerable to the governing Technicians Party (Young's prediction of a renamed Labour Party), mainly because of the damage to the country's global competitiveness.<sup>141</sup> In Young's narrative, government gives way to some of the demands coming from a movement he calls the Populists, but these demands are already delimited by the movement's social makeup which reflects a political alliance, between residual egalitarianism among party dissidents and members of the traditional ruling class who see in meritocracy the erosion of inherited wealth and privileges.<sup>142</sup>

From the standpoint of Young's futurology the discursive revival of meritocracy as the centerpiece of Britain's post-Brexit government is a predictable response to the prospects of competition in largely unknown markets.<sup>143</sup> So is the place of the arts in rather weak arguments against Conservative education reforms in England.<sup>144</sup> Despite the discourses I have examined which authenticate much of Young's analysis, it is important to recognise that in keeping with many left-leaning discourses, his sociology gives the impression of a social dichotomy where rampant individualism — motivated by success in exams, IQ tests and so forth — is set against a more plural vision of intelligence and social virtues.<sup>145</sup> However what this study of good-faith economy shows is that society is not fractured by such a simple division. Rather there are multiple structures which channel creativity and virtuous action into discursive routines. The weapons of working class solidarity, particularly the withdrawal of labour, also need to be looked at more carefully if divide and rule strategies are not to succeed. Among the distractions from that task are the influential discourses of social-entrepreneurship which, consistent with 19<sup>th</sup> century suspicions of trade unionism, promise a generous release of creative and productive capacities unrestrained by regimes of collective political power.<sup>146</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In this concluding chapter I have focused on the avant-garde inspired discourses and organisations associated with 'the artistic critique of capitalism'. *Pace* Boltanski and Chiapello's arguments about this strand of anti-capitalist critique, I have argued that its exhaustion is not so much a result of incorporation by new management, but a consequence of its own generosity within a reputation market supported by the good-faith economy. I discussed the influence of the good-faith nexus on the promotion of artistic social

engagement and, more broadly, on public perceptions of what matters politically. Sholette's artistic social engagement in favour of workers' rights is at odds with the collectivist idea that you cannot help others unless you can help yourselves in the same manner. So like many artistic claims made in the areas of well-being the old demand, 'physician, heal thyself' is appropriate.

Given the structured deprivation of workers' rights within sight of the Statue of Liberty it is worth recalling Herbert Marcuse who noted that the poor are used by the left to discursively bypass political contradictions intensified by industrial affluence; this means that the public interest is equated with the interest of the poorest.<sup>147</sup> Marcuse admits that affluence makes this lowest common denominator approach increasingly problematic since the working class enjoys some of the benefits of industrialisation. For Marcuse the conceptual solution was to embrace society's outsiders and their rejections of a civilisation which produces a 'one dimensional' human consciousness. For some critics, this move detracts from intellectual labour and may slide into tacit support for deeply irrational and reactionary tendencies.<sup>148</sup> This issue surely adds to the significance of the arts as virtuous avenues of political engagement with marginal groups. However I have argued that this can come at an unacceptable cost to traditional practices of solidarity. If egalitarian values are really to be promoted workers' rights in different places need to be critically inter-related, rather than deploying pathos based on extreme situations of poverty and oppression.

Neoliberal socio-economic policies make it increasingly difficult to identify sectors that are free from gift economics, and particularly the subtle influences of the good-faith economy on work and organisation. However it may be objected that artistic resistance is articulated by organisations which have no direct linkages to the politics of private support and which, I have argued, are socially and politically valuable, such as Petare TV. There are also examples of arts projects in community education in the UK, and other contexts, which similarly show that by tackling structural issues collectively, and in terms of class, both individual and collective capabilities are developed very effectively.<sup>149</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that such groups may, in certain circumstances, be intellectually and socially 'enriched' by resistance to inequality should not detract from the costs of serious opposition along these lines.

As the fatalities in Petare show, these costs do not necessarily stop with verbal attacks, or victimisation in the workplace and other entirely negative consequences for well-being.



Radical projects, and organisations such as the CFS, are easily dissolved and replaced if they become troublesome. For no other reason, trade unionism deserves a much more central place in discourse of artistic social engagement. The theoretical accumulation of human and social capital does nothing to protect the poor when they tackle the key powers responsible for the perpetuation of the political order. Patrimonial capitalism means that increasing amounts of financial capital are available for good-faith economics. Thus participation in the arts has particular saliency because it supports very different political agendas: from below it may be regarded as the means of re-articulating historical and class consciousness; from above artistic participation may be the insurance policy against it ever being realised. Rooted in the moral division of labour which I have described, this ambiguity invites political opportunism.

The Labour Minister for the Arts from 1974-1976, Hugh Jenkins (1908-2004), mentioned in earlier chapters, noted that the artist is vulnerable (...) 'to quite unwittingly serving ends quite other than those he espouses.'<sup>150</sup> As discussed in chapter one Jenkins considered the spiritual aristocracy to be an obstacle to democratic reform of arts provision. This class fraction is most sharply defined by Maslow's 'self actualising' individuals who are seen to make their own way in life on the basis of intellectual commitment and creative merit; possibly outmaneuvering the structures of inequality. As the biographical appendices in this study show, such life-paths can result in a profound scepticism about the capitalist order but these and other examples of agency in the arts rarely correspond, or 'speak' to, the structural politics of trade unions. And when seemingly radical discourses of artistic social engagement do correspond they may accord with the most lamentable trade union discourses discussed above. This study does not find the philosophy of aesthetic autonomy to be an adequate explanation for this moral division of labour. The history of modern aesthetics is just one articulation of the good-faith economy which also lifts non-artistic activities from naked market calculations for the sake of higher moral, spiritual and ultimately political purposes.

The revolutions of the past sought to kill off the aristocracy because of the political significance of their bloodlines. A spiritual aristocracy cannot be 'beheaded', yet metaphysically that seems to be what is required if participation in the arts can be a more genuine means of fostering well-being. Appendix VI, discusses how this bloodless decapitation might be achieved. Arguably members of the spiritual aristocracy would actually benefit if their influence were significantly reduced.<sup>151</sup> The transactions of the good-faith

economy have accompanied increasing inequalities under capitalism; if public participation in the arts matters, it matters most at the level of decision making about public funding.

### **Coda**

In *The Making of the English Working Class*, E.P. Thompson (1968) shows the way the development of the class as a force, (rather than as another collection of capitalism's victims), was influenced by non-conformist religion as well as secular egalitarianism. A political cosmology fostered the sharing of political and economic risk at the heart of working class solidarity. In response the good-faith economy supports a proliferation of ostensibly open-minded (but relatively risk-free) practices which are thought to promote social justice and democracy, and are also spoken about in terms of solidarity. But a culture which creates these synthetic forms of solidarity is surely one where democracy is all the weaker and far-right identity politics can gain ground. To counter this more research needs to be instigated by the labour movement. Thompson insisted that class should not be seen as a way of life, but as a means of struggle.<sup>152</sup> That struggle cannot be reduced to the withdrawal of labour at points of production, but contemporary discourses of artistic resistance to capitalism, of party building on the left and even certain accounts of social-movement trade unionism, all tend to be vague when it comes to important structural questions which will define the spirit of solidarity in the future.<sup>153</sup> These questions are beyond the scope of this thesis, but among the important issues which always need to be addressed are the internal democracy and collective forms of decision-making of unions. Considering the trends I have discussed, these matters ought to include the most basic of all questions: who has membership rights in a trade union? As a means of disabling militancy, new laws in the US force unions to represent all employees, regardless of actual membership.<sup>154</sup> Yet such anti-union legislation also brings to the fore some of the issues that will be crucial for the future of social movement trade unionism. In forms of employment which increasingly blur the distinction between life and work, should 'home' life not be represented more fully by extending membership to spouses and companions? A formal membership expansion of this kind could help develop collective knowledge from within and from without the workplace and help connect different workplaces. This could only count politically if unions want to enhance the structures of collective decision making. The ideologies which guide trade unions need to be challenged from within and be informed by the patchwork of victories and defeats of the past.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre interview for *Cogito*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1991, by Gordon Reddiford and William Watts Miller. Reprinted in Knight (ed.) (1998), p.272.

<sup>2</sup> See Dean (2009), pp. 37-38.

<sup>3</sup> The critiques coming from MacIntyre and Dean appear all the more pertinent following the 2011-2012 judicial public inquiry into 'the culture, practices and ethics of the British press', chaired by Lord Justice Leveson. This took place in the wake of the scandal surrounding phone-hacking by News International. In a legal appraisal of the inquiry, Geoffrey Robertson QC, a leading barrister in the area of speech rights, discusses the State and market failures in the mass media that were made apparent by the Leveson investigation. Robertson argues that publishers and editors have a vested interest in portraying the bodies that regulate them, such as the Press Complaints Commission, as strong and effective, even as they criticise failures of regulation in other areas. See 'Who stands for the public in Murdoch vs the government?' by Geoffrey Robertson, (20<sup>th</sup> September 2011) <http://blogs.reuters.com/mediafile/2011/09/20/who-stands-for-the-public-in-murdoch-vs-the-government/> (Last accessed January 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), p.190 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.385.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp.311-313.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.312.

<sup>8</sup> In relation to this deconstruction they write that: 'In the work of de-representing social classes, sociology's role was at once passive and active. It was passive in the sense that, less autonomous than it often claims to be, it gradually ceased to be interested in classes as they, in their traditional contours, came to be represented in society. It was active in the sense that sociology makes its own contribution to the task of selecting and representing what matters socially.' Ibid. p.301 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.301.

<sup>10</sup> Krugman goes on to point out that the personal possession of great wealth has less and less to do with the business knowledge, organisation, or even greed. The majority of people on the Forbes 500 list of the richest people in the US, he points out, already fit Piketty's model of patrimonial capitalism; only a relatively elderly minority have fortunes that come from their own business activities. See interview with Paul Krugman on *Moyers & Company*, 'What the 1% Don't Want Us to Know', (18 April 2014). Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzQYA9Qjsi0> (Last accessed, December 2016).

<sup>11</sup> More examples of this discourse came in the wake of the 2016 presidential election of Donald Trump. In November the blog of the liberal-left Huffington Post, by Rajiv Vinnakota, argued that support for Trump reflected a lack of social capital in society: 'Our decreasing social mobility is a clear symptom of this decreasing social capital access for most Americans. Trump and Sanders both tapped into this sentiment, using language to vilify Secretary Clinton and the establishment while painting their own rosier picture of a stronger and more equal populace. But neither offered lasting solutions to the problem, because public policy can only do so much. Public policy changes are important, but the social capital gap cannot be addressed by simply raising the minimum wage or limiting immigration or even fighting for racial equality.' See 'The Real Reason for Trump: Social

Capital' by Rajiv Vinnakota, 14 November 2016, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rajiv-vinnakota/the-real-reason-for-trump\\_b\\_12962616.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rajiv-vinnakota/the-real-reason-for-trump_b_12962616.html) (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>12</sup> In 2010 Glasgow Media Group conducted an extensive YouGov poll about its proposed one-off property tax, payable on death, to be levied on the wealthiest 6 million people in Britain. The poll indicated 74% public support for the proposed tax. The purpose of the tax is to completely pay-off the UK's national debt as calculated in 2010. Greg Philo, of Glasgow Media Group, argued that austerity policies were not being properly debated by elected politicians, and were uncritically promoted by the media at the time. The poll gave a more accurate picture both of public opinion and of the political options Philo argued. While the poll presents very strong evidence for Philo's arguments it is interesting that support for the tax was actually slightly stronger among the rich than the poor. See Glasgow Media Group website at <http://www.glasgowmediagroup.org/the-wealth-tax> (Last accessed, December 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Reports from Venezuela suggest that the 2014 slump in oil prices prompted a renewed, and this time successful effort, to pursue progressive taxation and tax evasion. See 'Major Progressive Tax Reforms in Venezuela Start to Bear Fruit', by Rachel Boothroyd, 15 April 2015, <https://venezuelanalysis.com/news/11342> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Paul Krugman on *Moyers & Company*, op.cit.

<sup>15</sup> See Bourdieu (1977), pp.184-186.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> The 1942 period drama *The Magnificent Ambersons*, directed by Orson Welles, shows what, at that time, was the recent dissolution of this socio-economic order. More direct involvement in industry and enterprise had become important sources of wealth and status.

<sup>18</sup> See Young (1994), p.18. After the Great Depression of the 1930s salaries were to become as important as income from rents, stocks and shares, but in terms of political and social status the important consideration has never simply been rates of pay or conspicuous consumption. Just as important is the potential to express virtue in voluntary *pro bono* work, including joining committees and boards, councils, public panels and working groups and so on. The greater and more visible such gifts are to society, the greater the honour. In some cultures, personal generosity may be accepted with good-humoured promises to "retaliate", a riposte which implies the competition for honour. I first heard this in Nigeria. As Bourdieu (1977) points out, in gift-economics reciprocation must be done inventively so that it does not appear like a gift returned or a simple swap.

<sup>19</sup> See Hoffman (1996), (ed.) p.186.

<sup>20</sup> See for example Robert Hobson's discussion of Maslow in the context of psychotherapeutics, Hobson (1989), pp.139-146.

<sup>21</sup> See Sheldrake (2003), p.186.

<sup>22</sup> Marcuse may be accused of presenting a one-dimensional view of the scientific and industrial civilisation he critiques. For instance he takes Cold War corporatism as evidence of a momentous historical stage, rather than a pragmatic stick and carrot effort to get some workers on-side in capitalist economies. As evidence of class integration, and the closing of the political universe, Marcuse notes the difficulties that the United Automobile Workers, a US trade union which experienced problems identifying workers' demands which managers would not agree to in management's effort to be more popular than the union. However this example could be taken as evidence against Marcuse arguments about total integration given that union organisers recognised the

problem themselves. See Marcuse (2002) pp.22-35. More fundamentally Marcuse gives a one-dimensional view of organised labour neglecting the ideological complexity of trade unionism during the Cold War, and the plural character of 'civilisation' evident in Elias (2000) historical sociology. From Elias' perspective the movement towards vertical incorporation would have to be weighed against movements of horizontal integration, not least by working class organisations working nationally and internationally.

<sup>23</sup> For more on Maslow's interest in the arts see Hoffman (1996), (ed.) p.7 ff. Anthony Burgess's novel, *A Clockwork Orange*, was published in 1962, and during that decade in Britain Marcuse's idea of 'outsiders' increasingly translated into a focus on youth. This is strongly reflected in arts policy discourse of the time whereby innovation and experimentation in artistic production became almost synonymous with social entrepreneurship. Among the key English examples are: Inter-Action Trust, London; Brighton Combination, Brighton; Great Georges, Liverpool; Oval House London; Stainsby Arts Centre, Derbyshire; Institute for Research in Art and Technology, London.

<sup>24</sup> Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), p.63.

<sup>25</sup> One of the widely cited examples of these interventions, usually in the realm of public discourse, is the Austrian art collective, WochenKlausur, discussed by Kester (2004), see chapter three of this study. Since 1993 the collective states that it 'develops concrete proposals aimed at effective improvements to socio-political deficiencies. Proceeding even further and translating these proposals into action artistic creativity is no longer seen as a formal act but as an intervention into society.' See <http://urban-matters.org/organisations/wochenklausur> (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>26</sup> A comparable analysis which focuses criticism on counter-cultural politics is Heath and Potter's *The Rebel Sell*, which argues that: 'Rebellion is not a threat to the system it is the system.' See Heath and Potter (2006), p.178 ff. Although much less concerned with employment discourse than Boltanski and Chiapello, their overall argument rests on the idea that, under the influence of Freud, Marcuse and others, a politics centered on ideas of exploitation was supplanted by one focused more on oppressed identities.

<sup>27</sup> See Landry, Morley, Southwood, and Wright, (1985). The latter author, Patrick Wright, was head of the Management Development Unit at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations at the time of this publication.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pp.5 -13. The critique of 'structurelessness' and 'informal elites' draws on key writings Jo Freeman; Sheila Rowbotham; Richard Seyd. Reflecting on his experience of the Red Ladder Theatre collective in the 1970s Seyd is quoted at length on the time-consuming process of reaching the unanimous collective decisions that were central to Red Ladder at that time: 'Because we believed there could be nothing wrong with the structure since it was so democratic, this [collective] working-out led us to question people's individual personalities and psychologies. The effect of this ultra-egalitarianism, this idealistic democracy, was in fact to individualise everything.' (p.12) Comedia's pamphlet goes on to expose the somewhat disguised problems of accountability in such collectives. Landry et al argue that these problems are connected to self-righteous dogma which prefigures political defeat; rather than making the compromises necessary to gain power. Whereas such collectives are critiqued for what amounts to ideological adventurism, trade unionism is critiqued for being too defensive and lacking a spirit of innovation (pp.92-94). Arguably many of the issues the authors raise are rooted in the school system in Britain, and socialist compromises made in that area of policy, but the authors do not consider the school system and the long-term effects.

<sup>29</sup> See discussion of trade unions, Ibid. p.93.

<sup>30</sup> Despite its avowedly modern, and forward-looking, reformist standpoint, the commercial viability of *Marxism Today* ultimately depended on the viability of the Soviet Union. The magazine's reliance on

the geo-political status quo, and the exploitation of its contributors, and to some degree perhaps, the secret payments made to the British Communist party from Moscow, is discussed with those directly involved in John Harris's article, (*Guardian*, 29 September 2015), 'Marxism Today: the forgotten visionaries whose ideas could save Labour. Available online: geo-political status-quo that ended in marxism-today-forgotten-visionaries-whose-ideas-could-save-labour (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>31</sup> According to their critique a libertarian fixation on 'process politics' means that 'the collective can often lose sight of its larger political objectives and stress the primacy of the form of organisation over the political objectives it was set up to meet. See Landry et al (1985), op.cit., p. 37.

<sup>32</sup> Public funding has been the most important source of revenue for both Variant and La Mancha's publications, in both cases a significant portion of advertising revenue came from advertising from other State supported institutions and projects.

<sup>33</sup> In an open letter of complaint Oscar Sotillo Meneses says that such bureaucratic elements are against poetry and are responsible for 'vandalisation' of books and other materials during La Mancha's eviction. More generally they are accused of undermining the promise of the Bolivarian revolution. See *La Mancha* website <http://lamanchaweb.blogspot.fr/> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>34</sup> Helms, French and Bradley (2016), p.2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p.12.

<sup>34</sup> Given its critique of governance, and its focus on 'the relationship between organisational form and cultural democracy' [Ibid.p20], a weakness of Variant's twenty-four page report submitted to Creative Scotland in March 2016 is that it fails to move beyond an intensely theoretical mode of address to propose reforms for the public funders, or different courses of action for artists and others to consider. The report focuses on the 'contemporary visual arts of Scotland's cultural sector.' It needs to be remembered that Creative Scotland (CS) offered support for this report only after Variant had succeeded in making it evident that CS's decision making processes and grievance procedure were, at best, far from transparent; and these problems were not confined to the visual arts. However, even in their narrow field of investigation, the report's authors state that it was 'difficult to find a shared form of address, a register, and how to decide on inclusion and omission of theoretical as well as empirical detail. As a "position paper" this report thus remains a living document of work in progress.' [Ibid. p.16.] Despite its focus on forms of organisation and democracy there is no explicit mention made of relevant unions, such as the Scottish Artists Union, and to what extent they are avenues or obstacles to greater accountability, or cultural democracy. Leigh French argues these issues are dealt with in the discussion of network access. [From author's emails] The report states that 'the field of study was 'criss-crossed by social and organisational networks of interest, or affective environments comprised of status groups, which form a sense of their own fluctuating collective identities. (...) Identifying and unpicking some of these lines of positioning, recognition and construction has been a key challenge for this study.' [Ibid. p.14] Given this difficulty a discussion of the strategic reasoning of the key unions and professional associations and recent lobby groups in the visual arts would seem to be important yet they remain unidentified and unexamined in the report's 'conciliated approach', [Ibid. p.2.] Therefore 'the sector' appears to be a structure made up of thoroughly cryptic networks. By contrast with the actual content of Variant magazine, class is also invisible in the report. In short in their critical engagement with their funders Variant's report exhibits many of the traits problematised by the *New Spirit* critique of network society. See Boltanski and Chiapello (1995), p.104 ff. However Variant's reluctance on this occasion to talk openly about class and basic welfare issues, alongside their narrow focus on the visual arts, is only really apparent by comparison with campaigning groups such as France's Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires (CIP) highlighted in this chapter as a counterpoint to Boltanski and Chiapello's broad brush.

<sup>37</sup> Raunig, Ray and Wuggenig (eds.) (2011).

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<sup>38</sup> See 'Immanent Effects: Notes on Cre-activity', by Stefan Nowotny, in Raunig, Ray and Wuggenig (eds.) (2011), p.18.

<sup>39</sup> Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), pp.460-468.

<sup>40</sup> See 'The Misfortunes of the 'Artistic Critique' and of Cultural Employment', by Maurizio Lazzarato, in Raunig, Ray and Wuggenig (eds.), p.46.

<sup>41</sup> There are a number of feature films which portray the role of the arts in this social courtship. Among the most well known are the 1959 British production of John Braine's morality tale about social climbing, *Room at the Top*, directed by Jack Clayton; the 1972 French romance *Cesare and Rosalie* directed and co-written by Claude Sautet; and the 2010 French-Belgian comedy *Potiche* (Trophy Wife) directed by François Ozon ( see chapter 2, note 67). In each of these films artistic activity is a crucial aspect for the portrayal of class-crossing or illicit romance. Lazzarato implies that Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) are guilty of smearing the 20<sup>th</sup> century radical avant-garde tradition, making it appear to be wholly submissive to entrepreneurial ideas about progress. However, the aforementioned films are suggestive of the social dimensions of courtship which I have argued are more significant than socio-economic 'role models' or their origins.

<sup>42</sup> See Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires, <http://www.cip-idf.org/> (Last accessed November 2016).

<sup>43</sup> See 'Intermittents du spectacle : Audition de la CIP-IDF à l'Assemblée Nationale - 13 décembre 2012', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cq7RhTTDeo> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>44</sup> See [http://www.cip-idf.org/article.php?id\\_article=6937](http://www.cip-idf.org/article.php?id_article=6937) (Last accessed June 2017). Social dumping is a common term describing the business dynamics which encourage people and governments to follow profit seeking movements of capital and to minimise wage demands and social guarantees.

<sup>45</sup> See 'The Misfortunes of the 'Artistic Critique' and of Cultural Employment', by Maurizio Lazzarato, in Raunig, Ray and Wuggenig (eds.) (2011), p.54.

<sup>46</sup> In attempting to develop transnational strike capacity CIP cites the legal, or 'technical' restrictions to strike action imposed on unions, and according to many critics, via unions, especially in Britain. Yet working around such repressive laws rather than confronting them directly is in many instances the approach preferred by leaders of large unions fearful of legal punishments which threaten their resources and institutional status. See 'Vers une grève sociale transnationale', [https://www.google.fr/search?q=Vers+une+gr%C3%A8ve+sociale+transnationale&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b&gfe\\_rd=cr&ei=r8rDWPiJHofu8wfq7q3wBw](https://www.google.fr/search?q=Vers+une+gr%C3%A8ve+sociale+transnationale&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b&gfe_rd=cr&ei=r8rDWPiJHofu8wfq7q3wBw) (Last accessed March 2016).

<sup>47</sup> See 'The Geopolitics of Pimping', by Suely Rolnik, in Raunig, Ray and Wuggenig, (eds.) (2011), pp.23-40.

<sup>48</sup> See 'Unpredictable Outcomes / Unpredictable Outcasts: On Recent Debates over Creativity and the Creative Industries' by Marion von Osten, Ibid. pp. 133-146.

<sup>49</sup> See 'The Los Angelesation of London', by Angela McRobbie, Ibid. p.123.

<sup>50</sup> See Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) p.294. Of course the problems of mental stress are not entirely ignored by trade unions. In considering the malfunctions of trade unions what the *New Spirit* implies is that by helping to create a framework of bureaucratic 'tests' for employment progression in the context of economic precarity, unions added to the burdens of work in France. A related problem, it is argued, is that trade unions radicals waited for the systemic contradictions to 'mature' and turn into a

more general uprising. Overall, it is suggested that many unions effectively left their members, as opposed to people abandoning trade unions.

<sup>51</sup> This group of workers in culture and education is closely associated with the Carrot Workers Collective. Their campaigns are said to centre on 'developing tactics, strategies, formats, practices, dispositions, knowledges and tools' for solidarity in opposition to the exploitation of voluntary and precarious workers. See <https://precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com/about> (Last accessed May 2017).

<sup>52</sup> The 1982 Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT) Workshop Declaration benefited a number of independent producers including the Black Audio Film Collective; Amber Films; Retake; and Sankofa. See [http://www.luxonline.org.uk/histories/1980-1989/actt\\_declaration.html](http://www.luxonline.org.uk/histories/1980-1989/actt_declaration.html). See also 'Hunting, Fishing and Shooting the Working Classes', by Tom Jennings, in *Variant*, Spring 2009, p.34. <http://www.variant.org.uk/pdfs/issue34/Variant34.pdf> (Both last accessed March 2017).

<sup>53</sup> See Maurizio Lazzarato questions and answers at Tate Britain (19, January 2008), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQbq7AGnTFU>, (Last accessed, Feb 2017).

<sup>54</sup> Dean (2009), p.25.

<sup>55</sup> See [http://csimarket.com/Industry/Industry\\_Data.php](http://csimarket.com/Industry/Industry_Data.php) (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>56</sup> See Dean (2009), p.36 ff.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p.25.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p.30.

<sup>59</sup> Depending on their ideological orientation trade union organisers combat or replicate the perennial problem of politically atomised workforces. For an early analysis of the mixed blessings of communications technology for trade unionists see, 'Needed: A new Communications Model for a New Working Class Internationalism' by Peter Waterman, in Southall (1988) (ed.) pp.351-378. As Waterman points out, communications technology tended to bring about a form of "domination by the printed word and 'world' languages". This puts certain workers, organisers and ideological models of trade unionism in a relatively privileged position.

<sup>60</sup> See 'A New Model With Rough Edges: Venezuela's Community Councils', by Steve Ellner, June 11 2009. Online at <https://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/4512> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>61</sup> For a critique of clientelism and corruption at the level of community action, and via the social missions, see Corrales and Penfold (2011), p.85 ff. From the left, the trade union leader Orlando Chirino, mentioned in the previous chapter, made comparable points about community councils' lack of political autonomy and public accountability. From author's interview.

<sup>62</sup> Undoubtedly the fall in oil prices reduced the Venezuelan government's room for maneuver but revenues have also assisted the government in defending itself from 'economic warfare' that supporters of the Bolivarian revolution witness. See Curcio, P (2017) Also available online, <http://www.alainet.org/en/articulo/184345> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Dean (2009), p.172.

<sup>64</sup> The portrayal of the European Enlightenment and everything that followed as a mega-conspiracy is a key theme of fascist and far-right politics. This historical standpoint appears to have a renewed



currency in the battle of ideas which takes place primarily on the internet; a fact which points to a discernible gap between professional history and the consciousness of history facilitated by communicative capitalism. In this respect many professional historians appear complacent. In continuing to pursue the lines of enquiry that were established by the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945 the return of the ultra right-wing critique of modernity (in both capitalist and socialist forms) appears largely unchallenged.

<sup>65</sup> See Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), pp.349-353.

<sup>66</sup> According to John Pilger's 2010 documentary film, *The War You Don't See*, civilian casualties in World War I were 10%; in World War II 50%; in Iraq 90%. Available online at <https://vimeo.com/67739294> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>67</sup> In the 1930s Schmitt argued that the State's democratic institutions were disabled by the political pluralism of society. Once appointed president (*Kronjursist*) of the Union of National-Socialist Jurists, Schmitt's solution was to assist the Nazi regime in robbing society of checks and balances and countervailing powers. According to one of Schmitt's biographers, 'until the end [of Nazi rule Schmitt] behaved like a true Hobbesian, obeying in return for protection'. See Bendersky, (1983) p.263. However, as Habermas (1989) points out, theoretically Schmitt departed from Hobbes whilst retaining the myth of Leviathan power. See 'The Horrors of Autonomy, Carl Schmitt in English' in Habermas (1989), p.131.

<sup>68</sup> Still in line with Hobbesian thought war is the natural state of human affairs for Schmitt; culture must be subordinated to national self-determination; cultural myths are a vital component of national security; and 'the myth of the general strike' is to be replaced by national myth. Ibid. Habermas (1989), p.137.

<sup>69</sup> According to Schmitt with the secularisation associated with modern society, the church becomes a theater, and the artist takes over the function of the priest; thus the romantic subject occupies the central position instead of God. Rather than coming to a decision, the Romantic turns the world into an aesthetic occasion for self expression. See Schmitt, (2011) p.18 ff. Schmitt's much studied work literary analysis is based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. See Schmitt, (2009).

<sup>70</sup> In the case of the far-right, the key self-justifications for political opportunism are rooted in a deep scepticism about equality, mixed with a certain sense of victimisation. If war is the natural state of affairs, the belief in equality may be a short step away from betrayal.

<sup>71</sup> See report at, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-384167/Most-Britons-actually-support-BNP-policies.html> (Last accessed December 2014).

<sup>72</sup> This is what threatens European civilisation according to contemporary 'neo-fascist' proponents of distributism such as Roberto Fiore, an Italian former MEP and BNP ally. The implication is that inequality is culturally imported. For Fiore the fair distribution of property in society depends on adherence to a common culture and, very likely, the military as a pivotal political force. See Fiore's speech, online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG1tfDIS4NU> (Last accessed February 2017).

<sup>73</sup> Eleanor Marx, daughter of Karl, had a leading role in the trade union movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Britain she argued for parliamentary representation in order to conserve strike capacities. Speaking at the 1890 May Day rally in Hyde Park, she said; 'those of us who have gone through all the worry of the Dock Strike and especially the Gas Workers' Strike, and have seen the men, women and children stand around us, have had enough of strikes and we are determined to secure an eight hour day by legal enactment; unless we do so it will be taken from us at the first opportunity.' In Holmes (2015), pp. 332-333.

<sup>74</sup> From author's interviews.

<sup>75</sup> As we are frequently told on the internet we are only one-click-away from crucial information, from making a vital donation, or signing an urgent petition. These activities have an important place in democratic systems, and provide checks and balances on power. But it may also be argued that when they become a compensatory substitute for collective deliberation, and debate, damage is done to a vital democratic process.

<sup>76</sup> Dean (2009) pp. 37-38.

<sup>77</sup> Like all futurology Rifkin's predictions are based on the assumption that contemporary phenomena develop along the lines visible at the moment, and thus his analysis is based on people by-passing traditional companies by self-publishing and distributing music, films, or news via internet sites. Some online news and culture channels which require continual human labour are said to be entirely dependent on the donations. The changes Rifkin describes involve a diffusion of production and patronage, but Rifkin speaks in vaguer terms about economic democratisation. The 'revolution' he describes is perhaps best understood as an ideal type of the 'prosumer' he sees benefiting from marginal costs: someone who generates renewable energy linked to a larger energy net that distributes surplus supply; who is part of a car-sharing scheme; who books accommodation in other homes rather than hotels; who learns language on free software apps; and who is linked to cooperative groups with 3D printers producing complex items, and so on.

<sup>78</sup> Rifkin does not spare artistic labour from the impacts of technologically induced redundancy. He points to the sales of *Just This Once*, the first novel written by largely by computer software, also the rise of synthetic techniques of sampling and morphing everything from music to theatrical scenarios including the speech and expressions of film stars. See Rifkin (1995), p.159.

<sup>79</sup> See also Rifkin's talk 'Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis', filmed at Praxis Peace Institute by Edwin Rutsch (January 2010), <http://cultureofempathy.com/references/Experts/Jeremy-Rifkin.htm> (Last accessed January 2015).

<sup>80</sup> See Rifkin (1995) p.13 ff and (2014) p.20 ff

<sup>81</sup> See Rifkin's talk 'Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis', op.cit.

<sup>82</sup> A list of the Queens Museum's wealthy and illustrious benefactors, leaders, patrons, champions, ambassadors, partners and supporters is available online at, <http://www.queensmuseum.org/board-of-trustees/supporters-of-the-queens-museum> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>83</sup> The Marxism and Culture series editors (Esther Leslie, Professor of Political Aesthetics, University of London, and Mike Wayne, Reader in Film and Television Studies, Brunel University), write in preface that: 'Universities are slashing courses in the Arts and Humanities (...) in this bleak context there is less and less to lose'. It is very surprising therefore not to find that the issues of trade unionism, especially in universities and the creative industries, are not addressed in Sholette's book. See Sholette (2011), p. ix.

<sup>84</sup> Sholette (2011), p.19 ff.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p.130.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p.134.

<sup>87</sup> In making this argument Sholette also draws on the *New Spirit* thesis, Ibid. p.38. Notwithstanding the better times he recounts from the late 1960s and 70s when artists formed trade union like organisations, his description of artistic risk management today is very similar to that given in the *New Spirit*, cf. Boltanski and Chiapello, (2005), p.312.

<sup>88</sup> Broadly in line with Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) Sholette considers artists to be 'neoliberalism's favourite knowledge proletariat'. Sholette (2011), p.181.

<sup>89</sup> Sholette's arguments about 'gift[s] of resistance' is suggestive of anti-capitalist counter-propaganda, often supposed to surpass mere propaganda. In his words, 'a gift [is] passed forward with the hope that it will alter the "ideological DNA" of future recipients.' See Sholette (2011), p.108.

<sup>90</sup> One of the initiatives discussed by Sholette is the Illinois-based artists' collective Temporary Services. *Art Work - A National Conversation About Art, Labor, and Economics*, a 2009 freesheet publication by this collective is another example of the sense of disengagement from the actual politics and internal disputes of organised labour. For my critical account of the publication and associated issues see Logan, O. (2010), also available online, [http://www.variant.org.uk/pdfs/issue37\\_38/V37comment.pdf](http://www.variant.org.uk/pdfs/issue37_38/V37comment.pdf) (Last accessed December 2014). It is a great irony which goes to the heart of this thesis that Variant magazine saw fit to publish such a critique, and yet Variant's 'conciliated' report cited above creates another walled garden comparable to that of the 2009 publication by Temporary Services.

<sup>91</sup> Sholette (2011), pp.125-130.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. p.103. Indeed a similar mixture of competition and voluntaristic co-operation which makes art practices interesting for Sholette can be also be found in the porn industry's gifts to society. See Lane (2001), p.71.ff.

<sup>93</sup> Sholette also cites a dramatic rise in the number of artists in different countries. See Sholette (2011) pp. 125-127.

<sup>94</sup> A rather idealistic account of art and gift-giving is the *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*, by the US literary academic, Lewis Hyde. This book is referred to by Sholette (2011), p.100. Hyde's text may be taken either as a classic account of art and the generosity of the spirit, or an example of patrimonial folklore in a political economy which functions to erode the capacity to levy adequate taxes for purposes other than war. Bourdieu's observations about gift-economics as an extension of capitalist economism is absent from both Sholette and from Hyde. An anniversary edition of Hyde's book is significantly re-titled, *The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World*. See Hyde (2007). Unwittingly Sholette describes the complex dynamics of the good-faith-economy when he writes of 'communal *jouissance*' and says that; 'Some new, or perhaps not so new, collective imagination is materialising, confronting the worlds of art, politics, and business with a seemingly limitless reservoir of surplus activity.' Sholette wonders if this surplus 'non-utilitarian productivity' might produce a 'return to grand ideas of collective transcendence? A new revolutionary politics or radical party formation? Or a sweeping aesthetic transformation of society as whole?' See Sholette (2011) p.151. As may be seen in the Venezuelan context, the complexity of the good-faith economy is that it can integrate all these things at once and leave the social reproduction of class difference intact.

<sup>95</sup> 1947 legislation against public sector strikes was reformulated in 1966 in the wake of a transport strike. Governor Nelson Rockefeller appointed the panel which produced the Taylor Law, which grants the right of public employees to unionise but not to strike in New York State. The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) points out that the Taylor Law uses a very broad definition of strike activity and 'the courts have held that the law even prevents employees in certain situations from

stopping voluntary work'. UFT also states that 'even as strikes in New York State have become rarer, the conditions that drive unions to contemplate striking have not disappeared, a function of the Taylor Law's inability to prod government employers to bargain in good faith and sign timely contracts'. See <http://www.uft.org/labor-spotlight/history-taylor-law> (Last accessed, March 2017). Rockefeller was also involved in founding New York State's Council on the Arts in 1961 which awards more than 1,900 grants each year.

<sup>96</sup> Based on strategic purchases of petroleum resources, real estate and banking, the patrimonial power of the Rockefeller family matches that of any aristocratic dynasty in 'old Europe'. In attending to underdevelopment in Latin America of the 1960s Nelson Rockefeller officially favoured military governments. See 'Janus in Latin America', by Mariano Grondona, in Harrison and Yasin (2015), p.59.

<sup>97</sup> In an article on resistance to austerity policies at CUNY in 2016, Nivedita Majumdar and Barbara Bowen argue that the key to the union's strength in relatively successful negotiations that year was successful organisation by the Professional Staff Congress of a membership vote in favour of an illegal strike if necessary. Although the authors also point out this vote was late in the day, and the first for forty-three years. See 'CUNY's Last Lifeline' in Jacobin magazine, 17, July 2016. Online at, [ag.com/2016/07/cuny-psc-strike-contract-adjuncts-cuomo-funding/](http://ag.com/2016/07/cuny-psc-strike-contract-adjuncts-cuomo-funding/) (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>98</sup> Scholette, (2011) p.103.

<sup>99</sup> Scholette discusses his involvement with Gulf Labour Coalition (GLC), and Global Ultra Luxury Faction (GULF); campaigns which targeted the Guggenheim Museum in New York on the basis of the deprivation of construction workers' rights in Abu Dhabi where branches of the Louvre, The British Museum, and the Guggenheim are due to open. The 'Precarious Labour Pagent', connected to these campaigns, was funded by the Mellon Foundation. In outlining these campaigns Scholette also suggests that artistic activism is becoming an exit strategy for 'the 99%'. See 'Precarious Workers of the (Art) World Unite', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8KAopK0M-o> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>100</sup> See McCallum (2013), p. 5. As McCallum writes in an important study of trade unionism today such a strategic interpretation of solidarity 'would be comical if it did not recall US Labor's role in the American imperium'.

<sup>101</sup> For a discussion of arts which is suggestive of the process I have described here see Albert Oehlen's conversation with Wilfred Dickhoff and Martin Prinzhorn, in Harrison and Wood (eds.) (2003), pp.1163-1170. Thanks to the good-faith-economy the greatest assets possessed by artists and writers are indeed intelligence and effort, (merit) and the transactions between art and politics have to be deciphered as if in code language.

<sup>102</sup> 'Armed and Dangerous: Sex, software, politics, and firearms. Life's simple pleasures...' is the headline to Raymond's website. See also Raymond's post 'I'm not going to 'take everyone's guns away' (29 November 2015), <http://esr.ibiblio.org/?p=6895> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>103</sup> See 'Zero Marginal Thinking: Jeremy Rifkin gets it all wrong', by Eric Raymond (2014), online at <http://esr.ibiblio.org/?p=5558> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. Of course this applies to a wide array of products which promote intellectual services of one kind or another. However food and other physical commodities will never reach near zero marginal costs Raymond argues. Setting up production, and transportation, involve costs that will not go away, and as production becomes more technically and logistically complex the costs of human attention also increase.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> See Raymond, E.S. (2001)

<sup>107</sup> See also Rifkin (2014), pp. 217-222. No doubt Raymond is not only thinking about the ‘playful cleverness’ of hackers and ‘free’ software businesses, but also about the corporations which eventually adapted to the same market. ‘Free software’ is not necessarily given away but is said to respect the freedom and rights of the user as opposed to proprietary software which, it is argued, is a means to control and monitor customers. Raymond remarks on the irony that it was only due to the business activity of hackers that the major corporations were able to defend themselves against charges of monopolisation. See *Revolution OS*, documentary film by J.T.S. Moore (2001), online at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSHh2wfy\\_-4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSHh2wfy_-4) (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>108</sup> See Review of Rifkin’s (1995) *The End of Work*, by Bob Black, ‘What is Wrong With This Picture? A critique of a neo-futurist’s vision of the decline of work’, online at <https://www.whywork.org/rethinking/whywork/critique.html> (Last accessed January 2017).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> The idea that capitalism will cede control of markets — which of course implies that patents become less important — is also an enormous area of speculation in Rifkin’s thesis.

<sup>111</sup> Given his arguments in favour of gift-economics Sholette concludes paradoxically: ‘The archive has split open. We are its dead capital. It is the dawn of the dead’ Sholette (2011), p.188). According to Marx, capitalism inters labour in ‘dead’ capital with the effect of dominating ‘living labour’ embedded in capitalist production. See Braverman (1998), p.157. Like Rifkin, Sholette’s socio-economic analyses of capitalism draws on Marx, but as I have argued, only to bury the vital issues of ‘living’ labour.

<sup>112</sup> The roots of this divide are evident in reports from the period. John L. Hess, *The New York Times* correspondent in France during the 1960s and early 1970s registered the distance between workers and student demands in 1968. Also the reluctance of strikers demanding trade union recognition, and better pay and conditions, to allow students, who were deemed to be ‘mostly sons of the rich’ to take political leadership. A year later in 1969 Hess reported his conversation with a shopkeeper in Sartène, Corsica, who recalled local children chanting outside the local church: “God help the poor, because the rich don’t need it.” They were reprimanded by an elder adult who instructed them to chant: “Help the rich because the poor can earn their own living.” The shopkeeper concluded that “the young people are sweeping all that away.” The obvious implication is that freedom of expression had become paramount but Hess does not make clear what was being cast aside, at least in the mind of the shopkeeper, since a childish juxtaposition of rich and poor had not been forbidden, but possibly supplanted, by a rather apt Christian critique. See volume by Hess (1975), pp.152-153 & p.58.

<sup>113</sup> In a *Guardian* interview (31 August 2014) Rattle remarks that ‘the entire issue of music education is becoming an ever bigger issue all over Europe. Apart from the obvious cultural value, employers want people who can work in teams, think laterally and not in straight lines, all of which music gives you in spades’. Online at, <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/aug/31/simon-rattle-interview-proms-learning-music-birthright> (Last accessed February 2015).

<sup>114</sup> See Carey (1992), p.71 ff.

<sup>115</sup> If there is a real human affinity beyond this marriage of convenience between the technocratic thought and the generous practices of the spiritual aristocracy it may be founded in the Abraham

Maslow's discourse of 'peak experience'; this describes the reverie the self-actualising individual attains once his or her basic needs for security are assured. It is worth stressing the critique of peak experience articulated by the psychotherapist Robert Hobson (1920-1999). In *Forms of Feeling*, Hobson (1989) points out that people *expect* others to share attitudes derived from the feelings of transcendence associated with peak experience. He argues that this presumption is connected to the feeling of being outside a system, yet at the same time still feeling able to influence it from the inside. See Hobson (1989) pp.139-146.

<sup>116</sup> See Carey (1992), p.27.

<sup>117</sup> See Wilson (2009), p.151 ff.

<sup>118</sup> See also 'The Problem of Spiritual Authority in the Nineteenth Century', in Frye, N. (2005) pp.278-287.

<sup>119</sup> See Stott (2003), p.186.

<sup>120</sup> See 'Bourgeois Blues' by Mc Closkey, D. in Parth J. Shah (ed.) (2004), p.124 ff.

<sup>121</sup> Primary source texts that I refer here to are Adam Turl of the International Socialists in the US, and Peter Taffe of the Socialist Party in the UK. Turl stresses the rationalisation of industrial production, and the political-economic interdependency of productive and service labour, as opposed to Rifkin's emphasis on the massive decline of employment in factories. See Turl (2007) 'Is the US Becoming Post-industrial?', *International Socialist Review*, Issue 52, March–April, online at, <http://www.isreview.org/issues/52/postindustrial.shtml>.

Taffe places rather more importance on the structural contradictions brought about by automation which, he anticipates will divide capitalists and lead to a movement among them that is more open to Marxist solutions. See Taffe (2014) 'A Third Industrial Revolution' *Socialism Today* Issue 183 November, <http://www.socialismtoday.org/183/technology.html> (Both last accessed March 2017).

<sup>122</sup> See Akhtar and Moore (2017).

<sup>123</sup> See Brouillette, S. (2013) 'Academic Labor, the Aesthetics of Management, and the Promise of Autonomous Work', *nonsite.org*, May issue # 9, online journal available at, <http://nonsite.org/article/academic-labor-the-aesthetics-of-management-and-the-promise-of-autonomous-work>

<sup>124</sup> Edward Berman founded Inter-Action in 1968, a community arts organisation in Camden, London, focused on drama and the general idea of 'creative play'. Berman is regarded as one of Britain's pioneer social entrepreneurs and reports from this time stress Inter-Action's close integration within the 'community' and the intention of making 'a rippling effect' which might extend to the whole country. In its first two years Inter-Action attracted grants from Gulbenkian Foundation, Rowntree Trust, Chase Charity, Arts Council of Great Britain and Inner London Education Authority. It is also stated that Berman and his colleagues (former teachers and mostly university graduates) worked 14-16 hours a day for a subsistence wage of £7 per week. (Source, documents supplied by David Harding). The obvious sense of tireless commitment to 'propagating' the model of 'community workshops' demonstrated by Inter-Action runs counter to the social contract of the time, and specifically against the local government fair wages regulations; these were only abolished with the 1980 Employment Act. See Gosling, Machlin, and Meghir (1994), p.8 ff.

<sup>125</sup> See Young, R. J.C. (1996), pp.196-217.

<sup>126</sup> Following a strike at the Deliveroo company in London management asserted that that their disputed staff contracts meant that their delivery riders ‘can study, or take care of their children, they can work on a passion project (...) it means a less rigid and inflexible existence.’ See Deliveroo abandons plan to force ‘absurd’ new contract for staff”, by Zlata Rodionova, 17 August 2016, *The Independent*, online at, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/deliveroo-strike-contract-minimum-wage-protest-plans-wont-be-forced-a7195291.html> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>127</sup> See ‘Google Took Its 20% Back, But Other Companies Are Making Employee Side Projects Work For Them’ , by Sushma Subramanian (19 August 2013) Fast Company, online at, <https://www.fastcompany.com/3015963/google-took-its-20-back-but-other-companies-are-making-employee-side-projects-work-for-them> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>128</sup> It should be noted that Rifkin gives credit to private foundations for the support of his work, and indeed his vision of a massive expansion of voluntarism described as a ‘sharing economy’ is of course another expression of the good-faith economy.

<sup>129</sup> See Frye op.cit., p. 279.

<sup>130</sup> See Morris (1993), p.127.

<sup>131</sup> A particularly painful and long running struggle in Bolivia between cooperative miners, and unionised miners, the latter favouring nationalisation, resulted in a list of fatalities, including a minister in the avowedly socialist government of Evo Morales. See ‘What’s Behind Bolivia’s Cooperative Mining Wars?’, by Emily Achtenberg, (22 Nov 2016), *Nacla*, online at <http://nacla.org/blog/2016/11/23/what%E2%80%99s-behind-bolivia%E2%80%99s-cooperative-mining-wars> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>132</sup> See Rifkin (2014), pp.226-232.

<sup>133</sup> Proletarian production and bourgeois services are interdependent, as most Marxists argue; such as Braverman (1998), pp.284-293. See also Lebowitz (2010b), pp.96-102. These lines of critique suggest (contra Rifkin) that capitalist monopolies and cartels are even *more* of a force to be reckoned with.

<sup>134</sup> As Raymond Williams shows the theoretical autonomy of art articulated by the Modernist avant-garde is connected to the literary procedures which represent characters as historically and politically fragmented forms of life. See Williams (1996), pp. 65-80.

<sup>135</sup> Among the many examples of this discourse is the biopic, *Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll*, directed by Matt Whitecross (2010) and produced by Damian Jones. The film explores “the moral compass” of the polio sufferer, art school graduate and punk singer, Ian Dury, as the semi-fictional character of Dury lays claim to membership of the spiritual aristocracy. In response to finding out that his son has been bullied at school for being “posh”, Dury’s character says “we’re not posh, we’re arts and crafts”, at which point the audience knows this to be a higher claim and a license for a lot of misbehaviour conducted in the name of creative determination to succeed against the odds.

<sup>136</sup> Landry et al (1985), pp.60-63.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p.60.

<sup>138</sup> Commissioning a contextual study of Variant’s role in culture was a means to diffuse the tension stemming from complaints Variant had made concerning the decision making process at Creative Scotland. For the officers who were sensitive to some of these complaints, the report was a means for

Variant to demonstrate its value to others in Creative Scotland who appeared less sympathetic to Variant's activities, and to Creative Scotland as a whole. This dynamic was evident to me from the formal and informal meetings I attended with Leigh French and others to discuss and present Variant's case.

<sup>139</sup> For a theoretical and empirical summary of this perspective see Herod, A. (1997) pp.1-31. The two empirical examples Herod gives of the agency of trade unions show their role (a) in shaping US imperialist strategy in Latin America and (b) in winning the parity of labour contracts in US seaports thus creating an important grid for economic activity within the US.

<sup>140</sup> See McCallum (2013).

<sup>141</sup> See Young (1994) [1958], pp.176-177.

<sup>142</sup> As befits Young's unusual mixture of sociology and fiction the political outcome is uncertain. His book ends with a fictional publishers footnote that notes the death of the author during civil disturbances and states that, 'The failings of sociology are as illuminating as its successes.' This is to suggest that part of Young's analysis of the future at least underestimated the passion the populist movement would engender. Ibid. p,180.

<sup>143</sup> See 'Britain, the great meritocracy: Prime Minister's speech', Teresa May, 9 September 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/britain-the-great-meritocracy-prime-ministers-speech> (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>144</sup> A petition signed by over 102,000 people (E-petition 11173) expressing concern about the exclusion of expressive arts from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) prompted a Westminster parliamentary committee debate held on 4 July 2016. Based on English, mathematics, history or geography, science and a language, the EBacc policy is accused of instituting a 'false hierarchy' of subjects. The committee debate is a telling example of Britain's political discourse on the arts and education whereby the arts are a litmus test for egalitarian issues. In the absence of an egalitarian education and demonstrable equality of opportunity, expressive arts are subordinated to expectations of upward mobility. Thus the Conservative government position — that extremely uneven academic achievement in the above 'core' subjects is a social justice issue — appears at least as coherent on matters of equality as the opposition from the left. Framed to some extent, by the aforementioned petition both sides in the debate appear unconcerned with creativity and expressivity in core areas such as literature, history and languages where failure rates suggest the need of pedagogical review and reform. See <http://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/ca06ebdb-0a8e-4867-a9ea-4cc82c94ff54>, (Last accessed March 2017).

<sup>145</sup> See account of 'The Chelsea Manifesto' in Young (1994) [1958], p. xvii.

<sup>146</sup> In line with Rifkin the English writer and broadcaster, Paul Mason, argues that work is no longer central to the capitalist political economy and while some cling to the old methods — which Mason now doubts — a new generation of precarious workers are finding it easier to occupy and riot rather than joining a union. See Mason, P. (2015), p. 179. However, given the limited dividends of the latter forms of action in the countries as different as the US and Greece, the issue seems to be that the organised working class need to find ways of internationalising and socially reformulating the old methods.

<sup>147</sup> See Marcuse in Scott (1972), pp.103-104.

<sup>148</sup> See Hicks (2004), pp.162-167.



<sup>149</sup> Authors' interviews in the Snapcorps /Stuart Platt documentary film (2014), *The Making of Hi Ho Giro* (Edinburgh: Stills Gallery).

<sup>150</sup> According to Jenkins artists were used to oppose Labour's wealth tax. See Jenkins (1979), p.123.

<sup>151</sup> Arguably the first beneficiaries of this would be members of the spiritual aristocracy itself, given the capacity of people within these circles to turn on one another. In a 2004 post entitled 'Racism Then and Now', Manick Govinda reports the case of a South Asian artist verbally abused at her exhibition opening in 1987: "The person responsible for the abuse was a member of the gallery's management collective. It was reported that his colleagues who were present did nothing to stop him. The artist sent out a statement quoting some of the perpetrator's remarks, such as 'all Indians and Blacks are stupid', 'all Indians want to be subservient to white people, and that's what they are', and that exhibiting in 'white art galleries was like prostitution and that [the artist] may as well open [her] legs and lay on [her back]'. The artist took down her work two days later, only to be told that she should bear the costs for terminating the exhibition." See, <http://www.spiked-online.com/Printable/0000000CA477.htm> (Last accessed January 2015).

<sup>152</sup> Thompson (1961).

<sup>153</sup> During 'the Great Depression' the unemployed formed a combined political force with the employed and in the United States between 1933 and 1937, trade union membership reportedly rose from 2.7 million to more than 7 million. Figures from Lance Selfa's article 'Who made the New Deal?' See <http://socialistworker.org/2008/11/14/who-made-the-new-deal> (Last accessed March 2017). This frequently cited example of social-movement-unionism (before it was given that name) shaped the New Deal economic policy along considerably more progressive lines than were evident at the start. However the incorporation of union officials into good-faith agreements exemplified by New York State's Taylor Law prefigures the harnessing of social movement trade unionism into the sort of repressive political settlement now seen in post-apartheid South Africa.

<sup>154</sup> See 'Protests Erupt in Kentucky After GOP Supermajority Passes Extreme Anti-Choice, Anti-Union Bills', *Democracy Now*, 9 January 2017, online at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0F8TXc\\_S2UU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0F8TXc_S2UU) (Last accessed March 2017).

## Appendix VI: Beheading the Spiritual Aristocracy

*There is powerful opposition to spreading and devolving control of public subsidy for the arts away from those now in charge and it is, of course, understandable that they should feel that way. They are the Lord's Anointed People, or at any rate the state's appointed people...*

Hugh Jenkins  
'A Socialist Policy for the Arts' (1976)<sup>1</sup>

*The coming years will see the need for very rapid change if we are to fend off environmental collapse, economic crisis and the awful adventure of war without end. Rapid change of the sort needed will only be possible if the distribution of knowledge can be made to serve the interests of the population as a whole rather than the privileges of small groups of men.*

Dan Hind (2010)  
*The Return of the Public*<sup>2</sup>

As stated in the concluding chapter of this thesis, the social impact of the arts, beneficial or otherwise, cannot be measured *ceteris paribus* because the arts are part of the mixture of State and market failures in important areas. The top-down control of the arts in Britain has not changed since Hugh Jenkins, Labour Minister for the Arts from 1974-1976 unsuccessfully sought support for cultural democracy in the Labour Party. In this appendix I consider the applicability of media reforms proposed by former publisher turned campaigner, Dan Hind.

A significant mirror image of the politics of participation in the arts can be seen in a provocative short film entitled *The Rise and Fall of the TV Journalist* made in 2007 by the British documentary film-maker Adam Curtis.<sup>3</sup> Like Dan Hind, Curtis is concerned here with a decline of critical and investigative reporting. He argues that a golden age in journalism began with the *Washington Post* exposure of Richard Nixon (1913-1994) in the Watergate scandal. This sparked-off an explosion of investigative reporting which served the public interest. At some level this reporting depended on the critical analysis of power in a complex world. Among the factors which, Curtis argues, led to the decline of this sort of reporting was an event which took journalists by complete surprise: the fall of the Soviet Union. The inability to see this coming dented journalists' professional self-confidence. With that there appears to have been an accompanying loss of confidence in the virtues afforded by the journalists' elite role in society. Curtis argues that journalists turned to the viewing public as a source of authentic experience and knowledge. Forms of public participation in news-

making were instituted, not to match the inter-activity of the internet, but as a substitute for critical analysis. The twist in the tail of Curtis' short analysis is that because high quality journalism no longer informs the public as it once did, the public is in a very poor position to inform or guide journalism.

Hind's remarks quoted above point to the same problem: the inability of an autonomous public to articulate itself. What is referred to as 'civil society' is not a mass-movement but a fractured polity. In his 2010 book Hind proposes a system of public meetings and referendums among the general population to foster public deliberation and to allocate resources for investigative journalism in the public interest. For Hind the process of public deliberation is just as important as the results. If art is not to be confused with entertainment, commerce or propaganda, as writers such as Lippard (1984) and Bishop (2012) insist, then there seem to be good reasons for the public funding of the arts to be subjected to a similar process of scrutiny and commissioning. It is not possible to fully discuss Hind's proposals for media reform here. His most important argument, however, which applies equally to the arts, is that what is required is a public system of knowledge. In the case of investigative reporting this does not require greater participation in journalism but much greater public deliberation about topics that are in the public interest and deserve more journalistic attention and resources. Hind argues that such reforms should be funded by levies on broadcasters in return for their use of public assets, and that the principle can be applied to much more than journalism. Indeed the same taxation principle might be applied to business activities like advertising in public space and the revenues directed towards arts projects similarly supported by the public.

Hind argues that if implemented his proposals for applying direct democracy to journalism would dramatically increase the number of public interest investigations and improve public knowledge. A signal of the strength of his arguments is that they have been raised in the Westminster parliament. Nevertheless Hind may underestimate the problem of democratic deficits (Mair 2013). This is a widespread problem which afflicts national and local governments as well as trade unions. It could of course be argued that the potential lack of public engagement and reluctance to vote in the sort of public commissioning process Hind envisages are less important issues than opening up decision making to society as a whole. Admirably democratic as this may sound it is an uncertain means of countering the key anti-democratic element of the good-faith economy; namely the power of a minority to define and

honour civic virtue in culture. If, as a result of insufficient popular engagement, public debate and decision making was still dominated by people who have vested interests in exaggerating the public benefits of the arts then the purpose of public deliberation would be defeated. Although Hind is acutely aware of dangers of meritocratic ideology and the aristocracy of the intellect he thinks public commissioning would favour the involvement of the retired or the unemployed and others 'with time to examine proposals in detail and be motivated to collaborate in changing the field of publicity.'<sup>4</sup> One of the original points raised by Variant in their dispute with their funders, Creative Scotland, but oddly omitted in their more conciliatory report discussed in chapter eight,<sup>5</sup> is that Creative Scotland, appeared to undervalue the time applicants spent dealing with an opaque decision making process. Hind's proposals suffer from the same problem in so far as some people's time seems less valuable than others and it is mistakenly assumed that the poor may even be time rich. There may be surer and fairer ways of removing the undue influences he has in mind rather than extending a doubtful referendum model into cultural decision making, at least for the arts.

An alternative approach, more applicable to the arts, could borrow from the criminal justice system where randomised jury service fosters deliberation and public autonomy. Jurors are also compensated for loss of earnings and benefits. The value of adopting this approach, and instituting juries for the public funding of the arts, is that like Hind's proposals it puts the onus on the 'professionals' and others working in the field to make their cases to an autonomous public; but it avoids his referendum system which would allow the spiritual aristocracy to swarm around their favourite institutions and projects, possibly deploying the same persuasive methods which discredit contemporary politics. These matters of the applicability of a jury system cannot be settled here, they require further research and debate in their own right. For the time being what needs to be registered from Hind's arguments is the need for public deliberation open competition.

The aspect of Hind's proposals, which is particularly relevant to the arts organisations examined in this study, is that the sort of direct democracy he advocates would help demarcate the interests of art markets from the public interest in the arts. The first example of throwing these different things together in Britain was the original rationale for the Arts Council.<sup>6</sup> Among other things this was designed to make sure that individual artists and authors benefited from direct and indirect public funding. The consequential concern with what went on in the markets, where their works and performances were on sale, tended to

subsume the underlying structural and institutional issues of cultural democracy. In effect, it is as if the development of culture could be simplistically calculated on the basis of the number of successful artists, writers and performances. If there is a realistic chance of dismantling this made-for-market measurement formula, it would appear to be through scrutiny by citizens who have no direct interest in the complex relationship between art, money and honour. This would be a bloodless means of beheading a proxy aristocracy.

Since the publication of his book, Hind has also urged trade unions in Britain to use their political funds to commission public interest journalism.<sup>7</sup> The principle is clear; if cultural participation matters, then it matters most of all at the level of support and patronage. As I have argued, the same principle ought to be applied to the arts because the good-faith-economy operates according to precisely the opposite principle. It strengthens capitalism by making the historical restraints, which societies have applied to markets, dependent on the activities of other markets and on voluntary distributions of capital, which are used to lever public finances.

An important influence on the unmaking of the working class which this thesis has examined is the philosophical separation of mind and body. Thus it is the mind, not the economy or the State that must be perfected to meet systemic needs, and because this project flounders in the face of working class solidarity, synthetic forms must be propagated and the struggle for equality is turned into a word game. In Anglophone scholarship about the arts, frequent references are made to Jacques Rancière's philosophy in which aesthetics are an avenue for the working-class to experience equality. The Schillerian aesthetic world, which Rancière revamps, is among other things a utopian theorisation of equality. There is nothing wrong with utopian thinking unless it takes over the realistic analysis of power, as it does in Rancière's view of equality delivered via artistic experience.

There is no French intellectual of any standing who is not, on paper, for the workers in one way or another. Likewise Rancière's political aesthetics present a semi-sovereign domain where equality can be substantially realised, even if only in the mind of the worker. His arguments might be better apprehended by comparing his theory with the wartime experience of the writer, poet and politician Emmanuel d'Astier de La Vigère (1900-1969). By the end of World War Two this Frenchman of aristocratic lineage, who had been a right-wing monarchist, had founded the *Libération* resistance group and could be classed as a communist sympathiser. He formed a great interest in another aristocrat's proto-technocratic model of

socialism, that of Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1865), and his book *Sur Saint-Simon* was published in 1962.<sup>8</sup> According to Rancière's (2007) theory, workers who followed Saint Simonian ideas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century entered an aesthetic realm whereby they reached the point of becoming spectators amid their own class and in this intellectual sense they experienced equality. So it is interesting that when d'Astier recalled the war he too stressed an unusual experience of equality. Alongside his dignity in the resistance movement he also found 'a classless society.'<sup>9</sup> Of course in this extreme instance equality was founded on the shared risks to life itself. The appropriate point to end on here is that d'Astier's experience of classlessness was embodied, as it must be if equality is *not* to remain in the mind or on paper. To this end what is required is a deeper public scrutiny of the artistic means, and socially instrumental ends which are declared in the arts in support of rights, equality and well-being. Scrutiny is particularly important because often, very subtly, concerns for human welfare are actually subordinated in the arts. The allocation of public resources instead follows the opportunities and priorities which arise from the kind of collaboration and class-crossing courtship supported by the good-faith economy.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Jenkins (1979), p.215.

<sup>2</sup> Hind (2010), p.205.

<sup>3</sup> *The Rise and Fall of the TV Journalist* made by Adam Curtis, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLwgzemOKPA> (Last accessed January 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Hind (2010), p.167.

<sup>5</sup> Helms, French and Bradley (2016).

<sup>6</sup> See 'Politics and Policies: The Case of the Arts Council', in Williams (1996), pp141-150.

<sup>7</sup> See Hind online article 'This is what 21st century unionism should look like' (11 July 2013) at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/dan-hind/this-is-what-21st-century-unionism-should-look-like> (Last accessed December 2014).

<sup>8</sup> d'Astier de La Vigère (1962).

<sup>9</sup> See interview with d'Astier in *The Sorrow and The Pity*, the documentary film by Marcel Ophüls (1969), re-released by Arrow Films, London, 2009.

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